EDGAR SALTUS

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EDGAR SALTUS, THE MAN

MARIE SALTUS

EDGAR SALTUS
in the Year 1890

Edgar Saltus · *the Man*

By Marie Saltus

. . *"even the weariest river*
Winds somewhere safe to sea."

1925
PASCAL COVICI · Publisher
CHICAGO

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PASCAL COVICI · *Publisher*
CHICAGO

To the Ego using the personality,

EDGAR SALTUS

Peace and Progress.

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FOREWORD

Without the explanation of reincarnation, the riddle of Edgar Saltus would rival that of the Sphinx. Super-developed in some things, correspondingly deficient in others, he presented an exterior having the defects of his finest qualities, suffused with complexes and contradictions.

Amusements and interests looked upon as pleasurable by the many, bored him in the extreme. With likes and dislikes shared and understood by few, he lived in a world of his own. This world was inhabited by creatures of the imagination — delightful beings — too delightful to be real, who, having the merit of being extinguishable at will, never remained to bore him.

To write a proper biography one should have perspective. It is lacking here. That in itself makes the writing difficult. Many of those associated with Mr. Saltus' life are incar-

nate, and not all of them are willing to be dragged into the limelight of publicity by the point of the pen.

Where it will not offend, names are given. Where the possibility of annoyance suggests itself, initials only are used. It circumscribes one more than a little.

A brief hundred years should elapse between the passing of an interesting personality and the putting into print of his life. It would follow here, but for the fact that so many mythical and malicious tales have been circulated about Edgar Saltus since his death that the necessity for giving the facts, good, bad, and indifferent, and putting an end to the weird, wild, and fantastic stories seems urgent.

From an article published in The Bookman one would believe the astonishing fact that Mr. Saltus made a practice of sitting "on a sort of baldachined throne dispersing cigarettes ten inches long and reading Chinese poetry." From the same source it was stated that he had a "salon, and was attended by some lady of his choice—not necessarily the same." As a final kick it was stated that he dyed his moustache.

Every newspaper in the country reprinted the article. What they did not reprint was a letter from me (in The Bookman also) denying the fabrications and giving the truth.

In a foreword of appreciation to a bibliography of Mr. Saltus' books, I was fortunately able to blue pencil the following, before it saw the darkness of print: "Edgar Saltus, neglected and alone, died in an obscure lodging-house in the East Side of New York." The author is a delightful man writing out of the fulness of his admiration. He put in only what he had been told.

Every day brings in new and wilder tales than the preceding one. They are so fantastic they would be amusing, were they not tragic.

If the public is sufficiently interested to pass along and embellish these grotesque stories, will they not be equally interested to know the truth?

When the writing of this biography was first attempted, an effort was made to give the life of Edgar Saltus without using the uninteresting "I" and "me." The effort failed. So

much of his life had been silhouetted against my own for over twenty years, that any attempt to remove the background injured the picture, and it was reluctantly put back there.

In giving many of the high lights and incidents of Mr. Saltus' later life, the desire has been to speak only of those in which he was the dominating figure. Many amusing events in which he was somewhat subsidiary, have been in consequence omitted.

With the desire to keep my personality in the background as much as possible, it is brought forward only when needed to throw some incident or characteristic of Mr. Saltus into relief.

It is a painful process to tear the veil from one's life and write fully and freely—almost brutally at times, with the heart's blood. Less would be useless. One must tell all or nothing.

A few years ago we had skeletons. Every respectable family had one—sometimes two. They were locked in cupboards, or carefully put away in bureau drawers with lavender and old laces. When spoken of, it was in whispers

and with profound respect. All that has changed. With the new psychology nothing is hidden. Everything must be aired in the light. One may be behind anything but the times. That is fatal.

That Edgar Saltus was unable to hit it off with two charming and cultured wives does not reflect on either of them. On the contrary. No normal woman could live with him for a week without friction. By normal, I refer to the woman who as a rule does the things that are expected of her, leaves undone those she is not expected to do, and has plenty of health in her.

The very fact that a woman was in the main like others, irritated Mr. Saltus. It was enough for any one to say to him, "It is considered the proper thing to do this or that," to send him into a rage. No act was too erratic or too independent to please him, provided it revealed and developed the individuality of the doer.

As he looked upon sports of all kinds as outlets for primitive egos, amusements also, unless draped with interesting psychological problems,

and gatherings of humans as an abomination and a stench to his nostrils, most women, in spite of the charm of his manner and the brilliance of his mind, would find little in common with him.

A boy at heart, adoring tricks, games and fairy stories, he did not want to be recalled to the things of earth. Impractical as he was, he could not endure practical people, accepting the blunders and forgetfulness of one even less so than himself with patience and grace. If five minutes before the dinner hour I would rush home and say:

"Too sorry dear, but I forgot to order anything for dinner. There is nothing in the house" (it happened more than once, but his reply was always the same) —

"Never mind, little puss. Thank God your mind is in the clouds—not in the kitchen. Let's go around the corner."

"Around the corner" meant to a tiny place called the Cozy frequented by Columbia students. Fortunately it was only a few yards from our home.

What he could not forgive was stupidity, and the desire to please Mrs. Smith and Mr. Jones and wonder what the neighbors would or would not think about things. This, however, he was never called upon to endure.

Only a person fundamentally the same and sharing his peculiar dislikes could have had a chance of success. A woman less temperamental and high-strung than himself would yield anything for peace. Yielding to Mr. Saltus was fatal. A mental ascendency on his part, no matter what the circumstances, and the beginning of the end was in sight.

There is a rather pathetic side to his biography. During the writing of it, Mr. Saltus seems to have been at my elbow all the time, a highly amused and almost disinterested critic. The writing of a biography had been a joke between us.

Asked by him once if I felt I had been in any way the gainer for my experiences of life with him, and what I would do in the future to keep my mind occupied if he passed on, I answered:

"Enormously the gainer. I could start a home."

"Would you make it into a training house for husbands—or turn it into a zoo?" he inquired.

"Neither. 'The Saltus Shelter for Scoundrels' would be the result. A sign in the window would inform the world that the superintendent, Marie Saltus, was a post-graduate on scoundrels." (It was a sobriquet Mr. Saltus was fond of applying to himself.) "It will be a wonderful home. Here is the first rule. 'Do all the things you ought not to do. Leave undone all the things you should do. All the comforts of home assured.' "

Mr. Saltus laughed, and added:

"Never pick up anything. Drop cigars and cigarettes on the floor. It will improve the carpets. Find fault with everything. Swear and make a row whenever you can."

To that I added that the waiting-list would be so long that the old scoundrels would be fighting among themselves to get in. The idea amused Mr. Saltus very much. Every day or

two he would come up with a new suggestion.

"See here, Mowgy, I have another rule for the old scoundrels. Having served such an apprenticeship with me," he said, "you will have the home overflowing in a week. Draw the line. Take no one under seventy-five and have tea with them only on Sundays in August."

The Saltus Shelter for Scoundrels became a pet theme. A diet was drawn up for the inmates by Mr. Saltus, and a course of reading outlined. The by-laws grew and were embellished.

This was during the last winter of his life, when failing health kept him indoors much of the time. To take him out of himself, it became necessary to supply food for the imagination.

"Suppose you became ill and you had to leave the old scoundrels to their fate? What then?" he inquired one day.

"That is provided for. If the Saltus Shelter is shattered, I will sit down and write your biography."

"That will fall flatter. No one will read it," he said.

"Yes, they will. I will call it 'The Annals of Ananias.' It will be your punishment for having written 'Madame Sapphira,' and people will fall over themselves to read it, for I will tell the worst."

He took notice of that.

"Wow! Wow! Will you tell about the time I got a piece of chocolate when I thought I was securing an opera glass, and how I threw it away, hitting a bald man on the head?"

"Of course. Didn't I say the worst?"

"Surely you won't mention the time I kicked the dog and smashed up the cut-glass?"

"Yes, I will, and how you played the hose on poor Jean, and all the other demoniacal things you have done."

At that he would say, "Wow—Wow," again, but the idea amused him, and scarcely a day passed without inquiries about the biography.

"You won't tell the worst really, will you, Mowgy? You will not mention the time I got squiffy, or the time I pretended I was a crazy man and miawed in the trolley car?"

"When I say everything, I mean everything."

"Then you must tell about the time in Paris when you tried to murder me, and when, mistaking a strange man for me, you wrote him such a villainous letter."

"Concerning these you are safe. There is too much about myself in those incidents to interest people. Like Caesar, the good will be interred with your bones."

"No one will believe there could have been such a demon. They will say the remarkable thing about it is that you have survived."

We joked about it a great deal during the winter, Mr. Saltus suggesting incidents to be included or omitted.

When after his death one publisher after another urged me to give them a biography, I did not know whether to laugh or to weep.

Could I? The words we had said repeated themselves. His wistful spirit seemed to stand at my side—laughing. He could take a joke on himself so well.

During the writing of it he has seemed to

be beside me—amused, but caring less, if anything, what any one might say or think about it. It was all trivial.

When engaged in writing a book it was Mr. Saltus' custom to sharpen dozens of pencils and have them at hand. Writing rapidly, he would discard one after another as they became dull, till the last was reached. These he sharpened again, and started in to repeat the process. After his death I collected a box full and kept them. It is with the same pencils that these words are being written. They have come straight from his hand to mine. His emanations seem to have permeated them.

It has not been an easy task, but it is truthful. The worst, as well as the best, has been given. His friends will find that the eager and aspiring spirit they admired was even bigger than they knew.

To the verdict of any human he was—and still must be—indifferent. It did not touch him in the flesh. It cannot reach him in the spirit. To him at the last one thing alone mattered, through the sum total of his life's experiences—the ability to know himself, and know-

ing that self to co-operate with his evolution. To turn from the illusory to the illimitable, seeking only the way; that was what mattered.

Realizing at the last that all the wisdom of the world could be epitomized in a single sentence, he found strength in that. "He attaineth peace into whom all desires flow as rivers into an ocean, which, being full, remaineth unaffected by any."

EDGAR SALTUS, THE MAN

Edgar Saltus, *The Man*

CHAPTER I

From the very beginning Edgar Saltus was none of the things that he appeared to be and a hundred that no one ever suspected. Having a nature with a curious complex of the super-feminine, Edgar Saltus took unto himself a prerogative usually assigned to it, and, snipping off a few years, gave the date of his birth to "Who's Who," as 1868.

Late in life, when confronted with the family Bible in which the date had been correctly set down, and with a photograph of himself as a baby on which his mother had proudly recorded the same, he admitted, reluctantly it must be confessed, that he had juggled things a bit. In those days births were not recorded as they now are.

His irritation at the detection being con-

strued as shame over his act, he laughed. The annoyance was at himself for omitting, when he had the chance, to knock off a few more objectionable years. The glorious gift of seeming as young as he looked had been offered by fate, and lost.

As a matter of fact Edgar Saltus was born in New York City, some time during the night of October 8, 1855.

When, later in life, he became interested in occultism, and the possibility of having an astrological chart was suggested, there was no one living who could tell him the exact hour. Trivial as it may seem, he would have given much to ascertain it. The Libra qualities assigned to those born in October were all his. This fact made him keen to know how they would be modified or increased by that of the sign rising at the hour of his birth.

It delighted him to brush aside many annoying happenings with the remark that all Libra people were volatile, evanescent, and often irritable; were born so, and could not escape their

limitations. Upon these occasions he would end up with the statement that however objectionable the sign, it was less so than that of Scorpio rising with the Sun in Taurus (which was mine). That, he declared, only a philosopher could understand and hit it off with. He had a splendid ally in the stars.

Edgar Saltus had the good fortune, or the bad luck, as one looks at it, to be born the son of a brilliant father. Francis Henry Saltus not only brought into being the first rifled steel cannon ever made, but perfected a number of other inventions as well. For this he was decorated by almost all the crowned heads of Europe. Queen Victoria knighted him and presented his wife with a marvelous Indian shawl. He was given the Legion of Honour of France, the Order of Isabella the Catholic, of Spain—the Order of Gustavus Vasa of Sweden, and the Order of Christ of Portugal. For having chartered a ship, loading it with provisions and sending it to the starving people of the Canary Islands during a famine, he was

given the inheritable title of Marquise de Casa Besa by the King of Portugal as well. The title, however, he never used.

From Solomon Saltus back to the time of the Emperor Tiberius, the men of the Saltus family appear to have left a mark either of gore or glory upon their generation. Francis Henry Saltus did not purpose to do less. An omnivorous reader, a student and a philosopher, with some queer twists to his curious mentality, he passed on the lot — twists included — not only to his son by a former wife, Francis Saltus Saltus, named after himself, but to the little Edgar as well.

Concerning Francis Saltus Saltus, volumes might be written. A genius, and ambidextrous, he could write sonnets with one hand and compose operas with the other. Without instruction he could improvise on any musical instrument and learn any language with equal facility.

He did all this as a bird sings, joyously, and with so little effort that one was appalled at his genius. A clearer case of subconscious memory

FRANCIS HENRY SALTUS
Father of Edgar Saltus

never existed. He learned nothing, but he remembered everything. To know where he had acquired it and how would be interesting.

His ability was supernormal, yet anything once written (he never made a revised copy) was tossed aside—fait accompli. A new thought or a fleeting melody called him elsewhere.

What he lacked was the concentration, the patience, the sustained interest in his creation, to go over his work, rearrange, polish and put it into shape to live. Details were deadly. What he had written—he had written. With an indifference proportionate to his genius, he yawned—and lighted a cigarette.

That lack was tragic. It meant a niche in the gallery of "might have beens" instead of the high place in the Hall of Fame, where he really belonged, and where, had he but condescended to care, he could have flamed as a volcano in active eruption.

Frank was in his sixth year when little Edgar made his début. These four, Francis Senior and

Junior, with Edgar and his mother, constituted the family.

A descendant of a line of illustrious Dutch admirals, Eliza Evertson, after two rather unhappy love affairs, married Francis Saltus. She had passed her first youth. Brave she must have been, to risk her happiness with a brilliantly eccentric husband, and take upon herself the upbringing of his even more erratic son.

Until Edgar was seven the experiment was fairly successful. Eliza Saltus, witty, quick at repartee, and interestingly sarcastic, took her place in the "family party" which constituted the social set in those days. New York was a small place. Everybody who was anybody, knew everybody else.

Tall, fair, and distinguished looking, wearing his honors and decorations as lightly as a boutonniere, Francis Saltus was a splendid foil for the brunette beauty and vivacious spirits of his wife. During these early years together they traveled a great deal, and the problem of peace did not present itself. Eliza Evertson was a per-

son not easily submerged. In a large home in West Seventeenth Street, none too cheerful at best, filled with massive Italian furniture of carved olive wood, these four struggled for a time to keep together and form a family.

Of those early years Mr. Saltus always told with sadness — how his mother fought against the influence of Frank, who, even at pre-adolescence, evinced many of the peculiarities and angles which developed rapidly with the years.

Resentful over the father's preference for his first-born, the little Edgar became the idol of his mother's heart, giving to her his deepest affection in return. Francis Saltus' pride in the elder son outweighing every other sentiment, he could see no fault in him, in spite of his habit of getting up when he pleased, eating at odd times, composing on the piano at two a. m., or bringing all kinds of queer people to the house at any hour of the day or night.

Whether or not the stepmother exercised the tact which would have oiled the machinery of things, one cannot know. Good mothers

are seldom philosophers. The fact that Frank was over-indulged and given plenty of money by an adoring father, who scarcely noticed her own small son, must have hurt her independence and pride. That she could see only his faults, and nothing of his genius, cemented the bond between the father and Frank as nothing else could have done. Blond, handsome, debonair, Frank Saltus charmed as he breathed. Only his stepmother was impervious to his fascinations.

The little Edgar combined the Greek features of his father and half-brother with the dark eyes and olive coloring of his mother. High-strung, timid, and so nervous that a slight hesitancy marred his speech at times, the child lived in fear of offending his father by a refusal to repeat his mother's warnings against Frank, and the fear of enraging his mother by his unwillingness to repeat his father's comments.

The battle-ground of a ceaseless conflict between his parents, the boy developed a quality negative in one sense, dangerous in

EDGAR SALTUS
At Two Years of Age, sitting on the Lap of His Mother
ELIZA EVERTSON SALTUS

another. He was afraid to repeat anything of a disagreeable nature or admit an unpleasant truth. Forced to the wall he avoided truth,—made a jest of it if he could, or, as a last resource, denied it pointblank. It is the fear of danger and discord and the hanging back from it that injures. On the firing-line death may be in waiting, but fear has fled.

To get the right slant on Edgar Saltus' life as a whole, this early training—or lack of it—must be taken into consideration. This almost physical disability to tell the truth, if that truth were disagreeable, was equaled by his inability to bear pain. At any excess of it he fainted. It followed him throughout life. Rarely did he get into a dentist's chair without fainting.

With so many charming and endearing qualities, an understanding needing no words, a tenderness greater by far than that possessed by most women, one can but speculate as to what a rare and radiant being he would have been minus the handicap concerning truth, which, with all its ramifications, penetrated and

disintegrated much of his life and the lives closest to him.

Unable to make a go of it as a family, divorce in those days being looked upon as disgraceful, Francis Saltus took his first-born abroad, while Edgar was sent to St. Paul's School at Concord, New Hampshire. Never again did they attempt to live as a family. During vacations young Edgar went to his mother. An occasional call on his father was all that was required of him.

According to his own account he was always at the foot of his class and not popular. Uninterested in sports, abhorring all forms of "get together" societies, living very much in a world of his own imagining, he was as inconspicuous as he was unhappy. Slightly undersized, slim, straight, and well-proportioned, with his clear-cut features, dark oriental eyes, and olive skin, he looked and felt out of place in a western world,—as perhaps he was.

Girls took to him on sight, wrote to him, sent him locks of their hair, and suggested

EDGAR SALTUS
Sixteen Years of Age

meeting him. His first flirtation was with a girl from New Haven. That her name was Nellie was all he remembered of the episode.

During the summer vacations he had a succession of flirtations. A dip into them would be like turning a page of "Who Was Who" a generation ago. One irate father, thinking he had called too often upon his young daughter, put it to him straight.

"Young man, you have made yourself very much at home in this house. What are your intentions?"

"To leave," he replied quickly, as he made for the door.

Another occasion was more complicated. This time it was the girl herself, a girl he had vowed to work and wait for forever if necessary. Suggesting that they omit the waiting and do the working upon their respective parents, the girl persuaded him to elope, very much against his will. It was the last thing he wanted. To love and run was far more to his fancy. Letting drop the fact of what they con-

templated where it would percolate quickly, he drove off with the bride-to-be in a dog-cart.

During this drive his wits got to working. At one parsonage after another they stopped, young Edgar getting out and inquiring at the door, only to drive on again. After an hour or so the girl's father overtook them. The elopement was off; the would-be bride in tears. Instead of inquiring for a clergyman to marry them, he had very politely inquired the way to the next village.

A danger escaped is always a ready theme for conversation, and it amused him more than a little to tell of this episode with the comment:

"No woman could drag me to the altar, I could slide like water through a crack and vanish."

So he could. A more ingenious man at evading anything he disliked never existed. While agreeing with every appearance of delight, he was concocting a clever escape. He always managed to slip through, as he said.

Of his father and brother he saw but little

during these years. The latter had to his credit a volume of verse, "Honey and Gall," and half a dozen operas, one of which he had conducted himself.

On the table near my hand is a copy of "Honey and Gall," an original, bound in green. On the fly-leaf in Frank's characteristic hand is written:

EDGAR E. SALTUS

With the love and good wishes of his most affectionate brother,

F. S. SALTUS.

No resentment there. A spirit of love, tolerance, and interest is exhaled. In the book are many marginal notes in the same hand-writing. Changes, interpolations, and corrections emphasize the beauty of the lines. The pity of it is that they were put there too late, but the soul of the author stares one in the face. Between the pages pressed flowers rest, souvenirs of shadow or sunshine. During the years the paper has not only become discolored but has reproduced the outline of the blossoms. The

book is like a living thing, so close does it bring the author. Emanations of his personality rise from the pages like perfume, compelling the sympathy and understanding he needed so uniquely.

One poem especially — "Pantheism" — tears the veil from his Greek features, revealing an Oriental in masquerade. Neither pagan nor Christian in the accepted sense, the musk-scented mysticism of eastern philosophy rises from it like incense. Out of place in the conventional environment of New York, — subconscious memory rising to the surface of his waking consciousness, he writes of other lives and loves, and anterior experiences, — putting his deepest and most profound beliefs into words. No other poem in the book strikes the same chord, or has as many marginal notes by the author.

Too handsome, too much sought after by women, too well supplied with money to have an incentive to work, he sank into something of a psychic stupor. He knew nothing of the

feminine as revealed by mother, sister or wife. To him, alone and misunderstood, Silence offered her arm. Silence is a dynamic force but it offers peace. One can but hope that he was given his full share.

Brilliant, handsome, with a manner irresistible to women, Frank Saltus was reaching the high noon of his life. So facile was his pen, so limitless the scope of his erratic genius, that young Edgar sank into the shadow of him. Tragically pathetic is the fact, that, despite the super-abundance of his gifts, he failed to bring any one of them to the perfection that could have made him immortal. There may have been philosophy even in this.

Among the other poems in the volume is one to his most intimate friend,—Edgar Fawcett. This friendship not only lasted his lifetime, but was stretched to include the younger Edgar, whose close association with the poet continued until the latter's death.

In spite of their real admiration and regard for Fawcett, both Edgar and Frank Saltus

enjoyed teasing and tormenting him enormously. His vulnerable places were so much exposed. Though timid with women, nevertheless he fancied they were in love with him. With inimitable skill, Frank Saltus composed letters purporting to come from passionate young heiresses who were in love with him. One especially wrote frequently and at length. Fawcett not only answered them, but, rushing to his rooms, read them aloud to Frank. More letters followed.

"What am I to do," he asked, "when women persecute me like this? Even you have not received such letters as mine."

The brothers agreed with him. While pretending to be annoyed by them Fawcett was really living in rapture. Nothing like it had brushed against his life before. As fast as the letters were sent out, did Fawcett come in to read them to their creator. It began to pall. One could not keep on writing them indefinitely. Something had to be done. The heiress who could not live without him threw out

vague hints of suicide. Hectic and harrowed, Fawcett came to Frank's rooms and burst into tears. After that the letters ceased. Fawcett could not be comforted. Some helpless and beautiful being had died for love of him. This incident became the episode of his life, and he passed over without knowing the truth.

According to Mr. Saltus, there was something charming and childlike about Edgar Fawcett. A rejected manuscript sent him into hysterics. He kept an account book, alphabetically arranged. If you offended him, a black mark went against your name. If you pleased him, a mark of merit was substituted.

From an old note-book of Mr. Saltus is copied the following: "Edgar Fawcett has to pay higher wages to his valet than anyone else, because he reads his poems to him." In another place is written: "Idleness is necessary to the artist. It is the quality in which he shines the best. Be idle, Fawcett. Let others toil. Be idle and give us a rest."

None the less the brothers had an affectionate admiration for him. Edgar Saltus dedicated "Love and Lore"

To
Edgar Fawcett.
Perfect poet,. . . . .perfect friend.

CHAPTER II

His school days in the States over, Edgar Saltus went abroad with his mother for an indefinite time. Europe became their headquarters during what must have been the most constructively interesting part of his early life. Heidelberg, Munich, the Sorbonne, and an elderly professor supplementing certain studies did their best for him. At an age when the world seemed his for the taking, with brilliant mind, unusual physical attractiveness, the ability to charm without effort, and sufficient means, his path was if anything too rosy.

The pampered only child of an adoring mother, he had only to express a wish to have it gratified. He became selfish and self-centered as the result. His motto was "Carpe diem," and he carefully contrived to live down to it.

During a summer in Switzerland without his mother Mr. Saltus met a charming young girl

of semi-royal birth, whom we will call Marie C—, and eloped with her. Her furious family followed, overtaking them in Venice. As she was unable, because of her exalted station, to be married by a priest without credentials and permission, the ceremony had been omitted for the moment. That complicated matters. Marie was whisked off to a convent, where, the year following, she died. As usual the woman paid. Meanwhile, a young and charming Venetian countess did her best to console the explorer in hearts.

On the heels of this episode came his mother. Funds were stopped, and to the chagrin of the countess who had braved disgrace, her charmer was taken back to Heidelberg.

With an insight and interest almost paternal, the old professor who had tutored him at times gave Mr. Saltus a lesson he never forgot. Realizing as he must have that the youth had a quality of fascination seldom encountered, a quality likely to lead to his early ruin if not circumscribed, he assigned himself the job. Taking

him to an exhibit where wax figures representing parts of the human body in different stages of disease were set up for a clinic, he let it do its work.

Illness, ugliness, unsightliness of any kind, had a horror for Mr. Saltus. It was an intrinsic part of his inner essence. That exhibit nearly did for him. It made him ill for a week,—the most profitable illness he ever had in his life. Never in his wildest and least responsible moments did he have an affair with any woman other than of his own class.

A student of the classics, with Flaubert sitting on the lotus leaf of perfection before his eyes, it soon became the desire of his heart to meet some of the great ones of letters. Even then the young Edgar was trying his hand at it.

Through the friendship of Stuart Merrill, a young American poet living in Paris, he had the supreme bliss of being presented to Victor Hugo. The anticipation of it alone made him tremble. It was to him like meeting the Dalai Lama in person. Reverently he approached the

great one repeating, as he did so, the Byzantine formula, "May I speak and live?"

The magnificent one condescended to permit it. From a great chair which resembled a shrine and in which he looked like an old idol, he deigned to speak to his admirer. Mr. Saltus left his presence with winged feet.

The author of "Poèmes Antiques," Leconte de Lisle, was another to whom the youthful aspirant was on his knees. Through Stuart Merrill again he was admitted to Olympus.

"You are a church. You have your worshipers," he told the poet. Leconte de Lisle listened, or pretended to listen, with indifference. That attitude of his appealed as much to Mr. Saltus as his poems. It was the way genius should act, he reflected.

Another meteor crossing his orbit was Verlaine. It was at the Café François Premier that they met. Shabby, dirty, and a little drunk, he talked delightfully as only poets and madmen can. He talked of his "prisons" and of his "charity hospitals," quite unaffectedly and as

a landed proprietor speaks of his estates. One of these Edgar Saltus visited. It was an enclosure at the back of a shop in a blind alley, where he had a cot that stood not on the floor, for there was no floor, but on the earth.

Of Oscar Wilde and Owen Meredith, he had at that time only a peep in passing. His particular chums were the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Francis Hope. Among the interesting personalities with whom he became friends was the Baron Harden Hickey. In what way he became a Baron was never elucidated to Mr. Saltus' satisfaction. Poet, scholar, and crack duelist, his sword was as mighty as his pen. At my hand is a book of his called "Euthanasia," and inscribed in his writing are the words:

To

Edgar Saltus.....the unique,
From his extravagant admirer
H. H.

Harden Hickey had ambitions. One of them was to found a monarchy at Trinidad and rule there. He was nothing if not original. The

post of Poet Laureate he offered to Edgar Saltus. Owing to the intervention of the Powers, the project failed. Harden Hickey killed himself. Such friends in any event were not commonplace.

Deciding at last that he must have some kind of an occupation, his mother having on his account drawn liberally from her principal, Mr. Saltus decided to return to the United States Once there he entered Columbia Law School Terse, clear, and versatile with his pen, the law seemed more or less to beckon. Plead he could not; owing to his acute nervousness and his slight hesitancy of speech that was out of the question. The uninteresting but necessary technical side of the law could alone be his. In some climates and altitudes Mr. Saltus' speech became almost a stammer. In others it vanished. Never was it unpleasant, and many thought it rather fascinating. People affected him in this way. Most of them got on his nerves, and the peculiar hesitancy followed, while with those to whom he was accustomed,

he could talk for hours without a trace of it. Even as a youth his disinclination to meet people, his horror of crowds, and his desire to be alone a great deal were becoming marked characteristics. So also was the quality he had developed as a child, the increasing inability to face a disagreeable issue.

During his life in Germany, Schopenhauer had been his daily food. From his angle religions were superstitions for the ignorant and credulous. They offered nothing. With Schopenhauer came Spinoza. Between them the Columbia student became saturated like a sponge.

At intervals Mr. Saltus had tried his hand at verse as well as prose. A sonnet written in Venice and published afterward under the title of "History" was among his first. Timidly, almost apologetically, he took it to his brother Frank.

"Splendid! Better than anything I ever did," was the unexpected praise. "I write more easily, but it is too much fag for me to polish

my work. You are slower, but you scintillate. Go in for letters. It is your place in the scheme of things."

Thus encouraged, and by the brother who was the flame of the family, Edgar Saltus took up his pencil in earnest. Fundamentally, both Edgar and Frank Saltus were alike. They seemed to be oriental souls functioning for a life in occidental bodies, and the clothes pinched. Neither could endure routine, nor could they tolerate the prescribed and circumscribed existence of the western world. It was difficult to internalize in an environment both objective and external. They were subtle, indolent, exotic, living in worlds of their own, as far removed from those with whom they brushed elbows as is the fourth dimension.

Frank let himself go the way of least resistance, without effort or desire to fit in with his environment. Having traveled everywhere, and exhausted to its limit every emotion and experience, bored to tears with the world outside of his imagination and finally even with

that within, he stimulated what remained with alcohol and drugs. As the mood took him he composed, tossing off sonnets and serenades like champagne, carelessly and without effort, a Titan with the indifference of a pigmy. What he might have been, had he forced his furtive and fertile fancy to grapple with the tedium of sandpaper and polish, only an extension of consciousness could reveal.

Writing of him in those days James Huneker said:

"He had the look of a Greek god gone to ruin. He was fond of absinthe and I never saw him without a cigarette in his mouth. He carved sonnets out of solid wood and compiled epigrams for Town Topics as a pastime. He composed feuilletons that would have made the fortune of a boulevardier. He was a ruin, but he was a gentleman. Edgar Saltus was handsome in a different way, dark, petit maitre."

Of Frank Saltus' multiple love affairs one alone cut deep enough to leave an imprint.

Under the title "To Marie B—," he wrote one of his best poems.

Curiously enough, the name Marie had been that of Edgar's first and unfortunate love. So convinced was he that no one with that name could survive close association with a Saltus, that from the first hour of our acquaintance he refused to call me by it, using a contraction I had lisped as an infant in trying to pronounce Marie, Mowgy. It was the last word he spoke on earth.

The son of a brilliant father and brother of a genius, Edgar Saltus was made conscious of his supposed inferiority by the world at large. To his mother, in spite of her indulgent idolatry of him, must be given the credit that he, too, did not sink into an apathy and dream his life away. The worst side of his brother's character was held always before him, as well as his inability to earn anything with all his talents, and the fact that he, Edgar, was an Evertson as well as a Saltus was used effectively. As far as she could she fought the soft, sensual

streak in his nature, the oriental under its mask. Too late to grapple with his fixed habit of avoiding the ugly, unpleasant, and the irksome, she hammered in the lesson of dissipated talents and a wasted life. So well was this done that Edgar Saltus, to use his own words, "By the grace of God and absent-minded professors," managed to take his degree as a Doctor of Law.

With that in one pocket and a sonnet in the other, he cut loose to have a little fling before starting in for a career at the bar. That career never materialized.

With a mother always a part of the upper ten, he was soon submerged by balls, receptions, and festivities. His ability to fraternize being limited and superficial and the necessity for a great deal of solitude fundamental, it was not long before the desire to express himself with his pen reasserted itself, and a number of sonnets was the result. Few knew anything of the hours he put in pruning, polishing, and sandpapering them. Albert Edwin Shroeder,

a friend reaching back to the Heidelberg days, knew the most, but even with him Edgar Saltus was reticent about his work. It may be mentioned in passing that Shroeder was an intimate friend of Frank Saltus, as well. His admiration for the brothers expressed itself in many ways. Among Mr. Saltus' effects are letters from him and some books. On the fly-leaf of one is written, "To the Master from his servant A. Shroeder." On another, "To the unique, from one who admires him uniquely." This friendship lasted until Mr. Shroeder's death.

Other intimate friends were Clarence and Walter Andrews. Of his escapades with them Mr. Saltus was never weary of telling, the tendrils of their friendship being long and strong. Of those who knew him in these halcyon days Walter Andrews alone survives. Sitting at my side, as he very graciously offered to do, he drove with Mr. Saltus' only child, his daughter, Mrs. J. Theus Munds, and myself, to Sleepy

Hollow Cemetery and saw the ashes of his oldest friend returned to the earth.

Not fitted by nature for the cut and dried, the literal and the precise, longing more and more to express himself in writing, he let the law linger. Having already several stories to his credit, the possibility of making letters his profession appealed strongly to Mr. Saltus. Money in itself meant nothing to him. It went through his hands as through a sieve. To be free from rules and routine, free to express himself, that alone mattered, and that, despite the inroads made into their capital, he could do.

Law books were consigned to the trash baskets. Paper and pencils took their place, and it was not long before the results took on a golden hue.

At that epoch, his star rising to the ascendent and Fame flitting before him as a will-o'-the-wisp urging him on, he met one of New York's most beautiful young matrons — Mme. C——. An American herself of old Knickerbocker

stock, married to a nobleman, she represented youth, beauty, charm, and position, added to which she had a brilliant mind.

A serious love affair resulted. Vainly did Mrs. Saltus urge her son to marry and settle down. Vainly did the family of Mme. C—— warn her of possible perils ahead. So handsome in those days that the papers referred to him as the "Pocket Apollo," so popular that girls fought for his favor, Mr. Saltus had a triumphal sail through a social sea as heady as champagne.

From his own account and a diary of Mme. C—'s found after his death, the affair must have cut deep. Quoting from it one reads:

"Edgar called today. There is no one like him in the world. He is the unique. I adore him to madness."

Again one reads:

"Edgar is the center of my being. Never can I cease to love him. That is certain. But should he ever cease to love me—? It is unthinkable. I cannot contemplate it—and live."

Once again:

"They tell me that this cannot go on. I have children. Oh, my God! Can I tear him out of my heart—and live?"

There is no doubt whatever but that the devotion was very sincere on both sides. It ended, nevertheless, owing no doubt to the fine qualities of Mme. C—, who, putting the happiness of others before her own, went abroad and lost herself there for a time.

Proud, arrogant, accustomed to having his own way at any cost, selfish and self-centered as the result of his indulgent childhood, during which he had never exercised the least self-control, it was a new experience to Edgar Saltus. Taking what he wanted when he wanted it and because he wanted it, without the least thought of others, save perhaps his mother, he had built up on his weaknesses, in ignorance of, and not recognizing, his strength. The affair of Mme. C— hurt.

Little wonder it was that when a pretty and petite blonde girl swam into the maelstrom of

his environment, he made a grab for her. Pert and piquant, her face upturned in the waltz, he whispered the lines beginning: "Helen, thy beauty is to me" . . . following it up as only he could. In addition to her own attractiveness, Helen Read had a father who was a partner of J. Pierpont Morgan. She was no small catch, and there were many out with fishing tackle and bait.

On the surface it looked like an ideal match. All the gifts of the gods were divided between them. Besides, every one approved of it. That in itself should have warned them of disaster.

The year 1883 turned a new page, Edgar Saltus breaking into matrimony and into print almost simultaneously. Houghton, Mifflin and Company having agreed to bring out his translation of Balzac, the horizon opened like a fan. The microbe of ink having entered into his blood, he conceived the idea of putting Schopenhauer and Spinoza before the public in condensed and epigrammatic form. To their philosophy he determined to add his own. "The

Philosophy of Disenchantment" and "The Anatomy of Negation" began brewing in the caldron of his mind.

A note-book in which is condensed material for writing these books is perhaps the most interesting bit of intimate work Mr. Saltus left behind him, revealing as it does an Edgar Saltus unknown and unsuspected by the world. In it is no man giving out savories and soufflés with both hands, taking the world as a jest, a game, and an amusement. It reveals the serious and sober student, hiding behind a mask of smiles, subtleties, and cynicism; the soul of a seeker, a soul very like that of his brother Frank. So out of tune was it with its environment, so little understood, and so little expecting to be, that wrapping itself in a mantle of impenetrability and adjusting its mask, no one knew what existed behind it.

The note-book itself is most characteristic of Mr. Saltus. In it are sonnets many of which have been published, — notes for his work, — drafts of letters he expected to write, — quota-

tions from various sources and epigrams of his own and others jumbled together. Some of these are written with his almost copper-plate precision, and the rest jotted down late at night, perhaps after he had dined and wined well. These are mere scratches, which only one familiar with his hand could decipher.

Youth flames from a leaf on which he has written:

Edgar Saltus.

A.M., Ph. D., K.S.K., etc., etc., etc.

The pomposity of this amused him very much during his later years. The following quotations reveal what has been referred to as his oriental soul floundering in the dark, seeking expression in a language new to his tongue. Taken at random a few of the quotations are as follows:

"There are verses in the Vedas which when repeated are said to charm the birds and beasts."

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought."

"Having pervaded the Universe with a fragment of Myself,—I remain."

"Near to renunciation,—very near,—dwelleth eternal peace."

As material for a book on agnosticism it is amusing,—his agnosticism being in reality only his inability to accept creed-bound faiths. The quotations are proof, however, that germinal somewhere was an aspiration for the verities of things. Unable to find them, the ego drew in upon itself, closing the door. Behind that door however it was watching and waiting with a wistful yearning. Years later, after reading one stanza from the Book of Dzyan, it flung open the door and emerged, to bathe in the sunlight it had been seeking so long.

At the bottom of the page of quotations from the Gitâ is a footnote: "True perhaps but utterly unintelligible to the rabble."

It was not long after his marriage that turning a corner he saw Fame flitting ahead of him, smiling over her shoulder. The newspapers began to quote his witticisms, as for example:

Hostess—"Mr. Saltus, what character in fiction do you admire most?"

Saltus—"God."

His books, considered outrageous to a degree, began to sell like hot cakes. To quote again from a newspaper clipping of that day:

Depraved Customer—"Do you sell the books of Edgar Saltus?"

Virtuous Bookseller—"Sir, I keep Guy de Maupassant's, The Heptameron, and Zola's, but Saltus—never."

Edgar Saltus was made.

CHAPTER III

To go back a little. It was shortly after his marriage to Helen Read that the conventional trip to Europe followed. Added to the selfishness which the circumstances of his life had fostered abundantly, Edgar Saltus had a number of odd and well developed twists. Illness in any form was abhorrent to him, contact with it unthinkable, and even to hear about it objectionable. When his young wife suffered from neuralgia—a thing which not infrequently happened—he put on his hat and walked out. The idea of schooling himself to bear anything he disliked was as foreign as Choctaw.

High-tempered, moody, impatient to a degree seldom encountered, and with the preconceived idea that he was entirely right in everything, he set sail on the matrimonial sea. Two episodes will make clear why the shoals

were encountered so soon. Realizing then how oblique had been his angle, the story of his life must be thrown forward, as they say in filmdom, to 1912 and then back again to the earlier episode.

We were traveling in a *wagon-lit* from Germany to Paris. After he had tucked me in for the night I noticed that Mr. Saltus had removed only his coat and his shoes, and was going to bed practically clothed. That alone made me take notice. We had not been married long at the time, but I was acquainted with his habits. Better than any human I ever knew, he loved to be *en negligee*. He could slide out of his clothes and into a dressing-gown like an eel.

This extraordinary behavior was further emphasized when, in spite of his hatred of speaking to people, servants especially, I heard him whispering at the door to the guard. At such radical conduct, I asked what it was all about. His reluctance to answer made me even more insistent. With his cleverness at evasions

and his agility at inventing explanations off the bat, he put me aside with the suggestion that he had asked for more covering. Knowing his ways and his wiles backward and forward, I laughed. Explain he must. Then he said that we would be crossing the frontier in the early hours of the morning, and, as it would be necessary for him to get out and open our luggage for inspection, he had remained dressed. Realizing that it was difficult for me to sleep under any conditions, and fearful lest I be annoyed by it, he had told the man not to knock, but to come in quietly and touch him instead. It was consideration for me, nothing else.

The explanation apparently covered everything. Drawing up his blankets he said, "Goodnight."

Instead, however, of the usual deep breathing to follow, presently I heard him laughing, laughing heartily, and trying to suppress it. When questioned he could only say:

"If Helen could see me now! Good Lord!"

When he had repeated it three or four times, I sat up and told him he could tell the worst. This is what he said:

"When Helen and I were traveling this same route and we realized that the frontier meant getting up in the night and the horrors of the customs, I suggested that she be a sport, and toss up a coin to see which of us should take on the job."

"Horrors!" I interjected. "How could you even think of such a thing?"

"How could I? There you have it. How could I? I did, all the same. We were both young and healthy. I didn't see why my sex should be penalized. We threw, and it fell to her."

Another "Horrors" came from the opposite bed. "But of course you did not let her when it came to the scratch? You remembered that you were supposed to take care of her?"

"What I remember only too well is that I did let her do it. She spoke French beautifully and she did it quite uncomplainingly. What a

brute I was! I cannot believe that I was ever that sort of being."

"Suppose we toss up now?" I suggested.

Mr. Saltus laughed. "You! Why, little Puss, I would sit up all night with joy, rather than have you wakened. You go out and attend to the customs!" He laughed again. "If Helen could see me now! What a hell of a life I must have led her!"

The other episode occurred during the last years of his life, when we were living in the apartments where Mr. Saltus died. His bedroom and study were at the end of a long hall, removed from the noise of the front door, the elevator, and the telephone, where he could work in quiet.

Uninterrupted quiet was a vital essential to him. Distractions of any kind, no matter how well meant or accidental, sent him into hysterics and ended his work for the day, and he begged me never to speak to him unless the house was on fire. Sometimes through carelessness I did interrupt him as he went from

his study to his bedroom, asking him a question or telling him of something which had occurred, but when working in his study he was left in peace.

One morning, however (it was while he was writing on "The Imperial Orgy"), something happened which at the moment seemed so vital, that, impulsively and without realizing what the effect would be, I burst into his study without warning and started to tell him.

The effect on him was of such a nature that the errand was forgotten. With a yell like that of a maniac, Mr. Saltus grabbed his hair, pulling it out where it would give way. Still screaming, he batted his head against the walls and the furniture; and finally giving way utterly, he got down and hit his head on the floor.

None of it was directed against me—the offender, yet no woman could have been blamed for running out of the house. Ten minutes later, when he had been put to bed like a small boy, given a warm drink, and had an electric pad applied to his solar plexus, his

one request was that I sit beside him and read extracts from the "Gitâ."

His action was pitiful, tragic.

"Poor child! No one but yourself could understand and put up with such a demon," he said. "I should be taken to the lethal chamber and put out of the way. And yet I could not help it."

The realization that he, an old man then, a student of Theosophy, the first precept of which is self-restraint, could have given way as he had, hurt him cruelly. Understanding and sympathy brought him to himself rapidly. Otherwise he would have been ill.

Mr. Saltus was an unconscious psychic. With those he loved he needed no explanation of anything. He understood even to the extent of answering one's unspoken thoughts many times. So psychic was he, that his disinclination to be in crowds or meet many people came from the fact that they devitalized him, leaving him limp as a rag. When writing a book, as he himself often expressed it, he

was in a state of "high hallucinatory fever," giving out of his ectoplasm very much as a materializing medium gives it out in a séance, to build up a temporary body for the spirit.

It is a well-known scientific fact that any interruption during the process of materialization causes repercussion on the body of the medium, the velocity being such that illness, if not insanity, may result.

While creating a book, Mr. Saltus was in very much the same condition, the finer forces of his etheric body being semi-detached from the physical. He could not help it any more than he could help the color of his eyes. Lacking discipline and self-control from his youth, he could not, after his formative years, coordinate his forces so as to grapple with this limitation effectively.

During an interval of reading the "Gitâ" on this occasion he told me the following:

"In the early days when I was first married to Helen Read, I was writing on a novel. She had no idea how interruptions affected me—

nor did I realize myself how acute anything of the kind could become. I was in the middle of an intricate plot. Helen, who out of the kindness of her heart was bringing me a present, opened the door of my study and came in more quietly than you did. Before she could open her mouth to say a word, I began to scream and pull at my hair. Rushing to an open window I tore the manuscript, on which I had been working so long, into fragments and threw them into the street. Whether she thought I had gone suddenly insane and intended to kill her, she did not stop to say. When I looked around she had fled."

For a girl reared in an atmosphere of conventional respectability, as they were in those days, it must have been an insight into bedlam. Once again he made the remark:

"If Helen could see me now, I would seem natural to her. My next life is apt to be a busy one, paying my debts to her and to others."

In view of all this, and of the flirtations he kept up on every side, she must have had a

tolerance and a patience seldom encountered.

After Balzac and "The Philosophy of Disenchantment" and "The Anatomy of Negation" were off the press, novel after novel fell from his pen, and the newspaper articles quoted previously were appearing. In "A Transaction in Hearts" Mr. Saltus put some of his own experiences, but so changed that the public could not connect him with the plot. His literary bark was launched and under full sail. He could touch the garment of Fame, and the texture was soft and satisfying.

One of his novels was dedicated to E—R, his mother-in-law Emmaline Read. Another to V. A. B. was to his friend Valentine (or Vally) Blacque. E—W was to Miss Edith son, who later in life became the wife of Mr. Francis H. Wellman, a genius in his own field. Shroeder and Lorillard Ronalds were remembered as well.

During a summer abroad Mr. Saltus conceived the idea of writing "Mary Magdalen." The circumstances connected with it are inter-

esting. He was dining in the rooms of Lord Francis Hope one evening. Oscar Wilde was another guest. After their liqueurs and cigars the latter sauntered about, looking at some of the pictures he fancied. One representing Salome intrigued him more than a little. Beckoning to Mr. Saltus, he said:

"This picture calls me. I am going to write a classic—a play—'Salome.' It will be my masterpiece."

Near it was a small picture of the Magdalen.

"Do so," said Mr. Saltus, "and I will write a book—'Mary Magdalen.' We will pursue the wantons together."

Acting on the impulse, Mr. Saltus took rooms in Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, where, within walking distance of the British Museum, he could study his background for the story.

Mornings spent in research, afternoons in writing, with a bite of dinner at Pagani's in Great Portland Street, made up his days. There were interruptions, to be sure. One of

them was a girl named Maudie, who lived somewhere in Peckham. She joined him now and again at dinner. Asked to describe her, he said he had forgotten even her last name, but remembered that he had written of her, "She had the disposition of a sun-dial." This may have assisted to keep him in a good humor.

Many years later Mr. Saltus took me to see the rooms he had occupied during this time, with their queer old open fireplace, great four-poster bed, canopied on all sides, and the old desk at which he had spent so many happy hours. Working hours were happy hours to him, always. He had a sentiment for the place, and once when I was in London alone I stopped there, taking his old rooms for a time, and visiting the landmarks associated with that part of his life. That I should do this touched him profoundly.

During the writing of "Mary Magdalen" he met many interesting people. Among them was Owen Meredith, then British Ambassador to France. In connection with him a rather

amusing incident occurred. Dining one evening at the home of Lady B—, Mr. Saltus was vis-a-vis with Owen Meredith. In the course of the dinner the hostess gave the poet a novel, and asked him to translate an epigram on the fly-leaf which was written in Greek.

Looking at it he said:

"My eyes are not what they once were. Give it to our young friend here," meaning Mr. Saltus.

The passage that had stumped him stumped Mr. Saltus as well, but he refused to be caught. Glancing at it, he exclaimed:

"It is not fit to be translated in Lady B—'s presence."

At that both the rogues laughed.

In a monograph called "Parnassians Personally Encountered," Mr. Saltus tells of this episode, as also of his meeting with other celebrities of the day. Of Oscar Wilde he saw a great deal. The rapid-firing battery of his wit, his epigrams, which gushing up as a geyser confused and astounded the crowd, enchanted

him. At the then popular Café Royal in Regent Street, Wilde and himself, with a few congenial men, spent many an evening.

There was much in the mental companionship of Mr. Saltus and Wilde which sharpened and stimulated each, making their conversation a battle-ground of aphorisms and epigrams. According to Mr. Saltus, in spite of his abnormal life, Wilde's conversation, barring its brilliancy, was as respectable and conventional as that of a greengrocer. Neglecting to laugh at a doubtful joke tossed off by one of his admirers, he was asked somewhat sarcastically if he were shocked.

"I have lost the ability to be shocked, but not the ability to be bored," was the reply.

Vulgarity sickened him. Vice had to be perfumed, pagan, and private to intrigue him. His conversation was immaculate. Many incidents concerning Wilde are given in Mr. Saltus' monograph, "Oscar Wilde—An Idler's Impressions." They give a new slant on his

many-sided personality. One episode is especially illuminating.

With Mr. Saltus, Wilde was driving to his home in Chelsea on a bleak and bitter night. Upon alighting a man came up to them. He wore a short jacket which he opened. From neck to waist he was bare. At the sight Mr. Saltus gave him a gold piece, but Wilde, with entire simplicity, took off his own coat and put it about the man. It was a lesson Mr. Saltus never forgot.

CHAPTER IV

The next vital experience in Mr. Saltus' life was his divorce from Helen Read. Hopelessly unsuited to be the husband of any woman who expected to find a normal, conventional and altogether rational being, his marriage with her was doomed to failure from the first.

From his rooms on Fifth Avenue, at a large Italian table of carved olive wood (the same table on which I am writing these lines), he turned out novels like flapjacks, entertaining his acquaintances in the intervals.

Among the friends of the first Mrs. Saltus was a girl belonging to one of the oldest and best families in the country. Spanish in colouring, high bred in features, a champion at sports and a belle at the balls, she was sufficiently attractive to arrest the attention of a connoisseur. Owing to her friendship with his wife, she saw a great deal of Mr. Saltus also. Their

acquaintance, however, had begun many years before, when as a youth in Germany he had met the girl and her family. Too young at that time to think of marriage they had been semi-sweethearts.

It was only to be expected, then, that his side of the story was put forward with all the cleverness of a master of his craft, and what man, no matter how much in the wrong, does not consider himself much abused? In this case, he gained not only a sympathetic listener, but an ally.

Tea in his rooms perhaps, — a luncheon in some quiet and secluded restaurant to talk it over, and tongues began to wag. That wagging was more easily started than stopped. It gained momentum. Before it reached its height, Mrs. Saltus brought an action for divorce, naming her one-time friend as one of the co-respondents. Willing to agree to the divorce, provided the name of the girl was omitted, Mr. Saltus struck the first opposition of his life. Bitter over her friend's "taking ways", — for-

getting perhaps that even in court circles the American habit of souvenir hunting had become the fashion, — she may have thought a husband superior to a bit of stone from an historic ruin, or a piece of silver from a sanctuary. Possibly in those days they were.

Many years later, when asked by Mr. Saltus as a joke, what I would do, in case some woman lured him from our fireside, I read him the account of a Denver woman, who, hearing that her husband was about to elope with his typist, appeared at the office. She was on the lookout for bargains. Facing the offenders she agreed to let them go in peace with her blessing, if the typist would promise to provide her with a new hat. Hats were scarce and expensive. Husbands, cheap and plentiful, were not much in exchange. Commenting on it the paper said, "The woman who got the hat, was in luck."

This episode and the newspaper article about it occurring many years later, there was nothing to suggest the idea to the first incumbent. Besides, being the daughter of a many

times millionaire, she was probably well supplied with hats.

At this time, Edgar Saltus was at the height of his fame. The newspapers reeked with the scandal. There were editions after editions in which his name appeared in large type. To protect the name of the alleged co-respondent Mr. Saltus fought tooth and nail. However much he had been at fault in his treatment of Helen Read, his intentions now were to be chivalrous in the extreme, to protect the girl who had been dragged into such a maelstrom.

Every witticism he had sent out was used against him. His amusing reply "God", spoken of previously, became a boomerang. Having once been asked what books had helped him most, he replied "My own." From that joke a colossus of conceit arose.

The history of that suit was so written up and down and then rewritten, as to be boring in the extreme. After a great deal of delay, of mud-throwing, and heart-breaking, the name of her one-time friend having been with-

drawn, and all suggestion of indiscretion retracted, a divorce was given to Helen Read. She was a free woman again,—free to forget, if she could, the hectic experience of marriage with a man fundamentally different from those who had entered her life.

After the divorce Mr. Saltus threw himself into his work. "Mme. Sapphira" was the immediate result. Aimed at his first wife, in an attempt to vindicate himself,—with a thin plot, and written as it was with a purpose, it not only failed to interest, but reacted rather unpleasantly upon himself. His object in writing it was too obvious.

It was his custom in those days to begin writing immediately after his coffee in the morning. That alone constituted his breakfast, —a pot of coffee and a large pitcher of milk, with a roll or two or a few thin slices of toast. Cream and sugar he detested. Accustomed to this breakfast during his life abroad, it was a habit he never changed. The same breakfast

in the same proportions, was served to him until his last day.

Writing continuously until about two p. m., he would stop for a bite, and then go at it again until four. Hating routine and regularity above all things, his copy alone was excepted. It was his habit to write a book in the rough, jotting down the main facts and the dialogue. The next writing put it into readable form, and on this second he always worked the hardest. transforming sentences into graceful transitions, — interjecting epigrams, witticisms and clever dialogue, and penetrating the whole with his personality. The third writing (and he never wrote a book less than three times) gave it its final coat of varnish. Burnishing the finished product with untiring skill, it scintillated at last.

Poetry came more easily to him than prose. He had to school himself at first to avoid falling into it. On his knees before the spirit of Flaubert, he pruned and polished his work.

At four, it was his custom to go for a walk

Never interested in sports,—walking only because he recognized the necessity for keeping himself in physical trim, it was Spartan for him to do something he disliked, and to keep on doing it. Pride kept him on the job. The "Pocket Apollo" could not let himself go the way of least resistance. Shortly before this time his brother Frank, who, at the last, had become a physical wreck, had passed on. Outwardly this appeared to affect Mr. Saltus but little. In reality it touched the vital center of his hidden self. A photograph of Frank Saltus on a Shetland pony, against which the child Edgar was leaning, hung in the latter's room forever after. The likeness between them is striking. It is the only picture extant of Frank as a child.

Not long after the divorce, and while he was still much in the lime-light, Mr. Saltus met at a dinner party a married woman,—a Mrs. A——. Well known, wealthy, once divorced and the heroine of many romances, she took

one look at the "Pocket Apollo", and decided that she had met her fate.

During this time Mr. Saltus had become engaged to Miss Elsie Smith, a talented, charming and high-bred girl belonging to one of the oldest New York families, and expecting to marry her the following year, he was not seeking an affair. Seeking or not the affair followed him, and was the cause, indirect but unmistakable, of the wrecking of what might have been a happy life with his second wife. Quoting Mr. Saltus, it began in this way.

The day after the dinner, while serving tea in his rooms to his fiancée, a knock came at the door. That was unprecedented. No one was better barricaded against intrusion than he. Not only were lift men and bell boys well paid, but instructed in a law more drastic than that of the Medes and Persians. It was to the effect, that the people he wanted to see he would arrange to have reach him. Others who called, —no matter whom or what their errand— were to be told that he was in conference with

an Archbishop. If they still persisted, they were to be told that he was dead.

This fancy of his continued throughout life, as attendants in the Arizona Apartments must well remember. Nothing angered him more than infringement of these rules. Unless summoned, no servant—no matter what the occasion—dared to approach him.

By what guile, subterfuge or bribe Mrs. A—— had turned the trick, Mr. Saltus had forgotten. After repeated knocking he decided to go to the door, which he did, with hell-fire in his eyes, as his fiancée stepped behind a portiere.

Determined to throttle the intruder he flung open the door. Cool and fresh as a gardenia Mrs. A—— walked in. It was an awkward moment. In that instant he no doubt remembered some of the careless compliments of the night before. Going up to him, Mrs. A—— looked into his eyes and said:—

"I love you, and I have come to tell you of it. Dine with me tonight."

That was more awkward still. Even his ingenuity was taxed. Kissing her hand, telling her that she had dragged him from the heroine of a novel so abruptly that he was not normal, and promising to dine with her that evening, he bowed her out. No one else could have managed it so cleverly.

The lady of the first part then reappearing he laughed. Telling her that his promise to Mrs. A—— was the only way of sending her off, he sat down at once and wrote her a letter, saying that it would be impossible for him to dine with her after all. This he gave to his fiancèe, asking her to send it by a messenger on her way home.

It was well done. Knowing that his mail was bursting with letters from love-sick women,—knowing also that no scrap-book, however large, could hold the letters, locks of hair and photographs, that poured in on him daily, and accepting it as a part of a literary man's life,—she accepted this as well. They laughed over the episode and brushed it aside.

As a matter of fact Mr. Saltus played fair. He did not go to dine, but as soon as he was alone, he sent another note less formal than the first, asking Mrs. A—— to return the former note unopened, and saying that though dinner was impossible, he would give himself the pleasure of calling afterward.

This he did, and it turned the scales of his life. Questioned next day by his fiancée as to whether or not he had changed his mind and gone to dinner, he denied it vigorously. After that both ladies were invited for tea, great care being taken, however, that they should never meet again.

The following summer Mrs. A—— with a party of friends went abroad. Mr. Saltus joined them, safe in the knowledge that his fiancée was away with her family, where, being decidedly persona non grata, he could not be expected to follow. The summer passed and again he joined Mrs. A—— and her friends in Cuba. Spring saw him in New York again.

A year had elapsed, during which he saw his fiancée occasionally and Mrs. A—— often.

From two letters written by Mrs. A——, which, used as book-marks, were found between the leaves of an old novel after Mr. Saltus' death, a love that counted no cost—passionate and paralyzing—oozes from the pages. "How could I live if you should cease to love me?" was asked again and again.

Cease he did, however. There are those so constituted that they can drift out of an affair so gradually that it is over without any perceptible transition. It was that way with Edgar Saltus. Mercurial to a degree, easily put off by something so slight no one else would have been susceptible to it, when he was done—he was done. As he himself expressed it, he could not "relight a burnt-out cigar."

That affair over, he remembered the ring he had given and the girl to whom he was engaged. In spite of living in a social world poles apart from Mrs. A——, and in spite of absence and travel, rumors of the affair had

filtered to his fiancée. Straightforward herself, scorning subterfuge as weakness, she asked him to tell her the truth. With righteous indignation Mr. Saltus denied it in toto, declaring it was an invention intended to discredit him in her eyes. It was in this that he made the mistake of his life.

Talking it over with me years afterward, he admitted that had he told her the truth, loving him as she did, she would probably in the end have forgiven him. It was the streak of fear —fear of a moment's unpleasantness, which he might have faced then and there and surmounted—which was his undoing. Taking the easiest way for the time being, he reiterated his denials.

In glancing over the scenario of Edgar Saltus' life, this act, at the pinnacle of his popularity and fame, may in the region behind effects have set in motion forces which tore the peplum of popularity from him, and in spite of his genius pushed him into semi-obscurity at the last.

His denials accepted, and there being no reason for delay, he married Elsie Smith in Paris in 1895. It should have been a happy marriage, the two having sufficient in common and neither being in their first youth. Its rapid failure is therefore all the more pathetic.

Going from Paris to the south of France, the first mishap was that of breaking his ankle. Unable to stand pain, Mr. Saltus fainted three times while it was being set. That rather disgusted his wife. This accident led to their first misunderstanding, when, in answering a telegram from Mrs. Saltus Sr., news of the accident was excluded. Unwilling to hear anything of an unpleasant nature himself, Mr. Saltus was equally unwilling to tell any one he loved of a disagreeable episode. The memory of his early life and training was at the bottom of this, and from one aspect it was a most lovable quality.

Asked by Mr. Saltus why she had spoken of the accident, his wife replied that she had but told the truth. At this Mr. Saltus flew into

a rage, declaring, as he used to put in his copy, "Truth must be pleasant, or else withheld."

The incident was slight, but that which followed was not so. He being unable because of his ankle to get about freely, and wanting some cigarettes from a trunk, Mrs. Saltus volunteered to get them. She got the shock and surprise of her life as well. Carelessness over his personal effects was a characteristic of Mr. Saltus'. That carelessness was his undoing upon this occasion. Beside the cigarettes lay a letter from Mrs. A——. His wife read it. There and then she knew she had married him as the result of a fabrication. A scene followed. Furious at his detection, Mr. Saltus upbraided her for reading a letter not intended for her eyes. It was the beginning of the end.

In one of Mr. Saltus' note books is the copy of a letter sent to his wife shortly after the episode:

Elsie:—

To be quite candid with you I cannot be candid. I cannot write to you as I used to do.

I no longer know what you will keep to yourself, what you will repeat, nor yet how you will distort my words. The flow of confidence is checked. An artery has been severed . . . . If reading has given you any idea of what a battle is, you will remember that in the excitement of danger men may be shot and slashed and not notice their wounds until the fight is at an end.

Not until I got here did I realize what you had done in telling your mother you had married me under compulsion. Then I discovered that during the fight which I had entered single handed for your sake, I had been shot — shot from behind, shot by you.

There has been a great change in the weather, from being very hot it has become quite cool. I hope you are well and enjoying yourself.

As ever,

E. S.

The letter speaks for itself. In the same note book are entries made during the same time: —

May 3rd, 1896.

Problem:—"Which is harder; for a woman to live under the same roof with a man whom she detests, or for a man to live under the same roof with a woman who detests him?"

"Every day she invents some new way of being disagreeable."

"Love should have but one punishment for the wrongdoer,—that is, forgiveness."

"Injuries are writ in iron,—kindnesses scrawled in sand."

Again November 13th.

"Elsie having told me:—

1. That I can ask nothing of her.
2. That her affairs are no concern of mine.
3. That hereafter she will give no orders for me:

We lead separate lives,—but into my life I open windows. Against her own she closes doors."

One cannot at this day know or judge the inner ethics of it all. Mr. Saltus' side only has been poured into my ears. One thing, how-

ever, is certain. Mrs. Saltus, who suffered deeply at his hands, considered herself more than justified in all that she did.

The fool blames others for the tragedies of life. The sage blames no one. He knows that everything which happens is but the result of causes beyond his control. He learns from suffering and defeat. With Epictetus he says "We should wish things to be as they are."

CHAPTER V

Returning to the United States with his wife, Edgar Saltus took an apartment in the Florence in East 18th street, where, on an upper floor, his mother had lived for some time. Though their relations were strained to the breaking point, a link held them. Mrs. Saltus expected to become a mother in the autumn of 1897.

It was at this juncture that Mr. Saltus thought of journalism. His popularity as a novelist as well as his exchequer had dwindled. This was directly due to his divorce, the fighting of which had been expensive both in coin and character. Journalism held out a hand. A literary man should, he believed, be able to tackle anything with his pen.

The New York Journal, as the American was then called, gave him his first assignment. It was to go to Sing Sing prison and, seeing a

murderer electrocuted, write it up from his unique angle. That, for a man who could not hear about a cut finger without shuddering! It might have been a knock-out the first day. All night he fought with himself. To refuse the first assignment meant having the door of journalism shut in his face. To go and faint at the sight, might mean worse.

With characteristic ingenuity he mapped out a plan. "Go to Sing Sing prison? With pleasure." Imagination being one of his greatest assets, he sat up all night picturing and then writing the scene, taking a new slant on it, peppering his copy with witticism and metaphors; and the work was done. One might suppose he had supped on electrocutions.

Stuffing the copy in his pocket he went,—went to the death house, and in spite of his trembling legs, went with the officials near the chair itself. Then he closed his eyes. Next morning his article appeared, the editor complimenting him; "Edgar Saltus only could have seen so much in so little," he said.

Thereafter he was launched as a journalist, writing Sunday specials almost continuously. With this, and with Collier's Weekly, for which he edited a column called The Note Book, and a history which he was compiling for Collier's also, Mr. Saltus' working hours were ten out of the twenty-four, and his output greater than at any time since he had flowered into print.

Working continuously when indoors, taking his meals at the old Everett House, then on the upper corner of Union Square, he lived in a world of his own, accepting things as they were.

Writing of him at that time Town Topics said:—

"Time deals gently with Edgar Saltus. In spite of his arduous literary labours he is the same Edgar he was fifteen years ago. Slick, dark, jaunty. He has not taken on flesh and preserves the slim youthful shape of years ago. Tripping up the Avenue a day or two ago in his new straw hat and blue serge suit it was

hard to believe that he was not a summer man of this year's vintage. How does he do it? Concerning his work a pretty woman once said to him, 'Mr. Saltus, I never know what construction to put on your books.' 'Put the worst,' was the author's reply."

The following summers he spent with his mother at Narragansett Pier. Second only to Newport in that day, it was a most fashionable resort. Smartness and beauty vied with each other not only in Sherry's Casino but in the large hotels which no longer exist. The smart set absent from Newport were to be found at the Pier. Bar Harbor excepted, there was no where else to go and swim — in the swim.

At this epoch, in addition to his fame as a novelist and journalist, Mr. Saltus added that of being a Don Juan and a Casanova rolled into one, with a bit thrown in for good measure. They paled beside the reputation enveloping him. A whisper followed his footsteps. It was to the effect that not only had his first wife been glad to escape with her life but that his

second was but waiting the psychological moment to follow suit.

Young girls were warned against being seen with him. Elder women had to be restrained from flinging themselves in his way. When he appeared in the Casino, he at once became the center of interest. This was understandable, for he was startlingly handsome. A few years over forty,— his thick black hair parted in the center,—his chiselled features emphasized by the tilt of his head,—his small moustache twisted to a hair,—he gazed upon the world through eyes of pansy purple, which, while contemptuous, were saddened by all that he had suppressed in silence. Slight, scrupulously turned out, a walking stick always in his hand, he stood in relief against the other men at the Pier—an Olympian in a world of mortals.

A connection of my family,—a childhood playmate of my cousins, and a companion in youth of my eldest half-brother, Mr. Saltus was hurled into my life by a huge wave. We were in bathing at the time.

Spending that summer at Narragansett with my brother, happy in the vacation from school, where I misused the time for practicing music in scribbling, I imagined myself an embryonic Ouida. In the circumstances a Ouidaesque hero seemed worth bothering with.

"Here, Edgar,"—my brother caught Mr. Saltus by the arm—"disabuse this kid of the idea that she can learn to write."

Mr. Saltus turned, but a wave was quicker. It took him like a top, spinning him around and around, depositing him finally at my feet. He attempted to rise. The undertow thought otherwise. With his accustomed facetious flattery, he asked:

"What do I get for lying at the feet of a child?"

"A kick," was the reply, action following the words.

Our introduction was effected. Going up on the beach we sat down on the sand. It was a brilliant July morning.

"So you think you would like to write, Bambina? Don't. Take fatherly advice. A woman's sole duty in life is to charm and do nothing. Only old scoundrels like myself should work. Behold the result."

"You were badly brought up," he was told.

"How would you have tackled the job?" he inquired.

"Taking you down would have suited me much better."

That amused him. He laughed.

"Of course. It is only from babes like you that age learns now-a-days. How is it that you are the one of your family I meet last?" He hesitated. "No — not last, — for I seem always to have remembered you. Long ago you closed a door and left me in darkness. Now you open it again and smile. You should never do anything but smile, — and yet you have — oh, I don't know what! You take me back to Rome — back and back through lives and lives — if such were true."

I hastened to reassure him.

"Such things are true, surely. From the time I was able to think at all, I remembered many events from former lives. I have no recollection of knowing you, however."

"But you believe that you lived before? I'll tell you what I have never mentioned to any one. From an agnostic it would not ring true. If I have written anything which will live it is 'Imperial Purple.' The reason is simple. If there is anything in your theory at all, I lived in Rome. I was an eye-witness of the killing of Cæsar. The story of it ran off my pen. Text books were needless. I wrote as I remembered, and truth penetrates. Later I tried to write of Greece, and failed. It was mechanical. There was no subconscious memory to help me. A pretty theory,—that is all. When a bee dies it ceases to hum."

Joining my brother and myself Mr. Saltus lunched at the Casino. Later in the afternoon, overtaking us on the road with his bicycle, he joined us again. So satisfied and overbearing was his exterior, so arrogant his veneer, that it

was with difficulty one could penetrate it and see the over-indulged and pampered little boy, full of fun and longing to play,—sympathetic and full of sentiment, hiding the best beneath the worst,—fearful of being misunderstood,—of being his real self. Coming face to face with a little girl more pampered and self-willed even than himself gave him a shock.

That evening, a woman friend of my brother's making a fourth, we were Mr. Saltus' guests for dinner at the Casino. In those days Sherry's old Casino was a fairyland of fashion, beauty and smartness. It presented a brilliant scene at that moment.

In faultless evening clothes, his dark colouring emphasized by the expanse of shirt front, Mr. Saltus looked what he may have been,—an Oriental, trying to adapt himself to a foreign environment. He was, on the contrary, silhouetted against it.

Dinner over, my brother took his friend to watch the dancing. We were supposed to follow. At Mr. Saltus' suggestion, however, we turned

and went to the upper turret of the Casino. From there we stood and looked down upon the panorama below. It was an interesting sight. At tables shaded by immense coloured umbrellas made visible by multiple electric lights, the murmur of well turned out men, talking to beautiful women, rose like the hum of bees.

The orchestra, which was unusually fine, muted their violins with the plaintive strains of the Liebestod. Mr. Saltus could not tell one note from another, nor could he play on any musical instrument, but he had an ear as sensitive to the slightest discord as a composer's. The Liebestod spoke a language he understood. That language was mine also. It spoke even more clearly to me,—saturated as I had been with Wagner and the various motifs of his masterpieces since babyhood. Music moved me profoundly.

When he turned at last, it was to see tears in my eyes. He said nothing. There is that in silence which is more forceful than words.

That also was a language he understood. The orchestra ceased. The hum began again, but from a far distant ball-room there filtered the faint but unmistakable notes of "Love's Dream After the Ball." July twilights are long. Still silent, we watched a sky of coral and jade melt into a night spattered with stars.

A school girl, with little knowledge of men save that gleaned from Scott and Ouida, it was no wonder that at his first words I had the surprise of my life.

In true Ouidaesque style Mr. Saltus took a fold of my gown in his hand, dropped to his knees, and kissing it said: —

"All my life I have been a rudderless ship seeking harbour. Now I am home. I come a weary and sinful pilgrim to knock at the portals of paradise."

Indignant in the belief that I was considered too young to be treated as an equal, — regarding him, in spite of his extreme beauty, as too old to be thinking seriously about the future, I received his words with a blaze of

anger. A hasty and dignified exit was called for. That, however, was not easy to make. His back against the gate, Mr. Saltus went on talking. He said a great deal and he said it well.

Only that morning a woman sitting on the veranda of the hotel where we were stopping, had entertained the other old women who were knitting, with the recital of Mr. Saltus' life and his misdeeds. One remark constantly interjected had amused me: —

"He boasts that every novel he has written has been dug from a woman's heart."

This I threw at him like a bomb. He took it standing. He had to stand to control the gate which was the sole exit from the turret. Thereupon, and in spite of my efforts to go, he told me the story of his life in brief, pouring it out as rapidly as he could, admitting his mistakes and wrong doing, — confessing three-fold the iniquities which had been put to his discredit by the public. Carrying it up to date, he admitted that though he was under the same roof with his wife, he was not living with her,

and that he wanted to be free to start life over again.

"You are so young, I can almost bring you up," he said.

"Bring me up, indeed!" I exclaimed. "You will dig no experience out of my heart. The shadow of your personality shall never cloud my life." That seemed such a fine phrase at the time. Still indignant and fearful of being considered an ignorant child, I became silent. That was the way a Ouida heroine should act.

Disregarding both my silence and my resentment, Mr. Saltus went on talking:—

"I don't like your name. It means sorrow, and every Marie who has encountered the Saltus family has suffered from it. You shall be the exception. I will use the name you invented when as a baby you tried to pronounce it,—Mowgy. That is your name, and being such a pert little puss I will add that for good measure,—Mowgy-Puss. Now what animal will you attach to me?"

While speaking, Mr. Saltus had released his

hold on the gate. He was anxious to know what animal I would assign to him. Afterward he confessed that he had expected me to say a lion. That would have pleased him too well. Distracting his attention from the exit, I moved nearer to it. Answering "A skunk!" I emphasized it with a sudden bolt through the gate and rushed down stairs to the Casino.

An avalanche overwhelmed us there. Our absence having become prolonged, my brother, with Archibald Clavering Gunter, who warned him of my danger with every step, had searched not only the Casino but the sands. There was a heated scene. The friendship of years snapped like a wish-bone, and I was dragged back to the hotel.

There it might have ended,—would probably have ended, and the biography of Edgar Saltus have fallen into other hands than mine to write, but well-intentioned friends and relatives assisted things so super-abundantly, that what might have died a natural death took on new life and flourished.

Forbidden to speak to Mr. Saltus under penalty of being sent home to my father, it became at once an interesting romance. The following morning there was not a dowager in the hotel unacquainted with my misdeed, and none omitted to add their warning and advice. Hearing of the adventure, and that I was taking a landslide to perdition and was hell-bent, friends called to warn and save me. Dear old Gunter with genuine kindness of heart came also.

"I am a very busy man just now," he said, "but if you are determined to learn how to write, and will wait till I get this novel off my mind, I will take you in hand and see what I can make of you."

Everyone did their duty. The only one not offering advice was the hotel cat. Not permitted for a moment to leave my brother's side I seemed safe and secure. It was all in the seeming, for Mr. Saltus was a very ingenious man. The early afternoon papers from New York used to reach the Pier about three, boys taking them to all the hotels on the front. One stop-

ped at ours. We were sitting on the veranda at the time, my brother buying a paper as usual. With a knowing wink the newsboy shoved another into my hand. While every one else was reading I unfolded it. A note from Mr. Saltus fell out. It suggested that after I was supposed to be in bed that evening, I slip out, go down a back staircase and meet the writer at a place on the beach he designated. It was urgent. It was more. It suggested that if I did not appear he would drink himself into delirium, and then come to the hotel and have it out with my brother.

Youth is credulous. I met him at the place suggested. After that the newsboy served as a postman. Letters came and went. There was a thrill in doing it under their noses. It came out at last, however. I was returned to my father minus a character and the family warned to watch me very closely.

So fate went on weaving its web, and the karmic links of anterior lives reached out, binding our destiny.

CHAPTER VI

Autumn came, and the paw of the tiger that destiny is, reached out. It was a paw of velvet, however. I was called to the telephone one afternoon to speak to my violin teacher. Such a call was not unexpected. It had all been arranged beforehand, and it was Mr. Saltus saying "Hello!" None of the family had seen my violin teacher or heard his voice. All they knew was that I practiced many hours a day The arrangement worked to perfection. If I went off for my lessons a little earlier than necessary, it was unnoticed. The bicycle was useful also, being considered a healthful and needed exercise. I was encouraged to ride every afternoon, and Mr. Saltus and I would meet on the Riverside for a chat.

Barring his little daughter, Elsie, of whom Mr. Saltus was exceedingly fond, he made no mention of his family life, nor did I. This was

in pre-flapper days. The world was very old-fashioned. Bachelor girls and the rights of the individual were not talked about, or even thought of. Strange as it may seem in this emancipated era, any friendship between a married man and a young girl was looked upon not only as disgraceful, but impossible.

We talked it over. Realizing that while he remained under the roof with his wife, he owed her more than he could ever pay, realizing too that any indiscretion of mine must react upon a greatly beloved father, I closed the episode —or thought I had.

Within a few days after this Mrs. Francis Henry Saltus, Mr. Saltus' mother, called and invited me to tea at her home. There, at least, one would be free from censure. Other invitations followed and were accepted.

If there was a being on earth whom Mr. Saltus truly loved it was his mother. His deference to her and his solicitude for her were beautiful. It would have been tragic otherwise, considering how her entire life had been

devoted to him. He was her little boy even then,—naughty, perhaps, but her idol. As a matter of fact his mother understood him as little as others did. Love, however, is somewhat psychic. She never took his atheism seriously. Many a time she would interrupt some of his remarks to say:—

"This is not the real Edgar. It may take time, but he will come out of it all at the last."

Mr. Saltus often referred to this when, as she predicted, he did "come out of it."

So frequently was I a guest in his mother's drawing-room that it was difficult for my family to debar Mr. Saltus from our home. His interest in my father's library being accepted as evidence of his fitness, he was permitted to call. Better, they thought, for me to receive him under their roof than meet in secret, where unpleasant construction might be put upon it.

Like the proverbial camel, his nose once safely in the tent of the enemy, the rest followed. He was accepted as a friend of the family.

No one could enjoy a joke more readily than Mr. Saltus' mother. Quick-witted, clever at repartee, she was delighted when any one had the temerity to brave her son and give him back tit for tat. While I was having tea with them one afternoon Mr. Saltus outlined what he thought should be my study for the next few months, ending with the remark that a slip of a girl did not know what was good for her.

Unhesitatingly came the reply — "A slip will not be instructed by a snip."

Mr. Saltus was slightly undersized for a man. The remark rather hurt him, but his mother burst into a laugh. From that day until his death he was Snipps or Snippsy to me always. So fond did he become of the name that he used it almost entirely when writing or speaking of himself. Upon occasions, when annoyed at something he did I used the name of Edgar, he was hurt and indignant and could not be himself again until the other name was restored. Adopting from me a child language I always used with my pets he would say: —

"I be a good Snipps! (imitating a dog begging); I'm old dog Tray—ever faithful."

"Associating with a child has put you back where you belong," his mother once said to him. "You are nothing but a bad little boy, grown up."

Strangely enough, it was not so much a romantic attachment as fundamental qualities in common, that made possible the bond between a young girl and a middle-aged man. In meeting a temperament like his own, but in exaggerated form, it meant not only a common language, but an uncommon thing on his part, —that of revealing to himself his high-strung nervous excitability and absent-mindedness in the mirror of those qualities in another. In attempting to soothe the nerves of another, he forgot his own. In remembering to pick up handkerchiefs, gloves and purses, dropped under chairs and tables and forgotten, he gradually began to look after and take care of another even more helpless in that respect than himself.

With a girl, never popular at school, because

of her desire for silence and solitude, having more interest in reading than in games, he felt himself to be absolutely at home. As I was looked upon as abnormal and unnatural even by my family, the understanding and sympathy of such a brilliant man, with a wealth of information on every subject under heaven at his finger-tips, turned him into my Alma Mater.

About this time an incident occurred which was not only characteristic of Mr. Saltus' weakest side, but so far-reaching in its effects that no biography would be complete without it.

Admiring letters from women were his daily diet. As a rule he ignored them. At one time I started to make a scrap-book of them for him, calling it The Dollymops Daily. When a week or so would go by without bringing in a fresh batch of them, Mr. Saltus was told that his stock was going down and that he should have a care to his moustache.

Among these letters was one from England, from a Dorothy S——. With it was the photograph of a high-bred and pretty girl. Her

letter was different from the average one. Mr. Saltus answered it, and a correspondence began between them. Knowing of him only through his stories and articles in the newspapers, in ignorance that he was not only a married man but a father as well, she assumed that he was neither, and she wrote him to the effect that she was sure he was her affinity, and all the rest of it.

That was the time to have eased off, but Mr. Saltus did not. Her letters interested him. She was too far away to cause him inconvenience, for the moment at least, and material for stories might result.

Answering again he brushed aside the possibility of future unpleasantness, and sent her an inexpensive ring. The girl took this very seriously. Replying to his vague compliments, she formally accepted him and sent him a ring in return, which he brought up to me as a joke.

Vainly was he blackjacked and scarified by me in her behalf. The affair amused him. Having let her assume that he was an unmarried

man, he would not face the momentary unpleasantness of writing her the truth and putting the matter straight, at the price of a little humiliation.

Horrified, however, at the way she had taken it, and fearing possible results, he wrote to her saying that he was en route to South America on an assignment for a newspaper, and hoped it would end there. Far from it. After several unanswered letters, the girl's mother, having ascertained in some way that he was still in New York, sent him a note by registered mail telling him that her daughter, always delicate, had gone utterly to pieces over his silence, and asking the reason of it.

The more involved it became the less inclined was Mr. Saltus to face it, confess the truth and admit that he had replied for amusement only. No amount of hammering at him could make him realize that he was playing with the affections of a human being who might suffer in consequence. It had been only a diversion to him. He could not see why it

should not be the same to her. Weeks passed. Another letter from the mother saying that the girl had gone into rapid tuberculosis and was in the south of France, again urged him to write her. This last appeal sent Mr. Saltus almost into a fit.

"For God's sake tell the truth and have it over with," he was urged again and again. It seemed to be beyond him. What he had begun only as an amusement, without a thought of harm, had developed into a monster waiting to devour him.

When he finally answered the letter it was to say that he was in the bankruptcy court, utterly penniless, and, in the circumstances, thought it best to drop out of her life.

"Now," he said, "they will not think me worth following up."

After that the letters ceased and he heard nothing more, and it was several years before the dénouement occurred.

On the heels of this episode came a crushing grief. Mrs. Francis Henry Saltus, Mr. Saltus'

mother, died, very suddenly. The shock stunned him. It took him into a realm hitherto unknown — even unthought of, and it was long before he could readjust himself to life.

Even in his grief his strong strain of indifference to values, custom or common-sense kept to the fore. From the pot-pourri of his deep love for his mother, lack of attachment to material things, united with oriental atavism — he insisted that the body of his mother be buried with all her large and valuable jewels upon it, as the Egyptians surrounded the Ka with all the trappings and trifles of life.

There is no danger in giving out this fact. The exact spot where Mrs. Saltus is buried (unmarked by a stone, for Mr. Saltus did not believe in such things) is known only to myself and to the cemetery authorities. It is some little distance from the cemetery in which the ashes of her son now rest. Unfortunate it is, that one he loved so deeply could not have been buried in the same plot.

From the shock of this death Mr. Saltus'

health went to pieces, and the following spring saw him off to Europe. I was abroad also that year, but in another part of the continent, and it was months before we met again.

On this trip, however, Mr. Saltus made one of the few acquaintances destined to last until the end of his life. Among those at the Captain's table, and seated next to him, was a Miss G——. Young, beautiful, and belonging to one of the best families from whom Ambassadors had been chosen, nimble of tongue and optimistic of spirit, she did much to drag him from the extreme depression into which he had been submerged by his mother's passing.

Spiritual, unselfish, always thinking and doing for others, she represented a type of woman never encountered by him before. She saw the best in him and ignored the worst. To penetrate the depths of his depression, finding an agnostic hard soil to saturate, she finally persuaded him to go and consult a medium. With the open mind which Mr. Saltus always had, he agreed to do so, and, upon his return

to New York in the autumn, he sought out and went to a Margaret Stewart, a woman celebrated in her day as a remarkable psychic.

What she told him was rather upsetting to the firm philosophy of his life. It suggested possibilities. Not only did he receive a curiously characteristic message, purporting to come from his mother, but certain things concerning his home life and his future were predicted. These predictions included myself, and were to the effect that Mr. Saltus would ultimately be enabled to marry me and have his happiest years late in life. He lost no time in rushing up to my home with this news.

Assuming at first to "pooh-pooh" spiritualism as moonshine, his interest nevertheless increased. On the lookout for frauds, yet hoping as well to get something concrete to tie to, he went from medium to medium and from séance to séance. Critical, curious and cautious, unwilling to accept the phenomena presented, he was yet more unwilling to give up the quest.

After months of experimenting along these

lines, his decision, based on what he had both seen and heard, was that though the major part of it was fraudulent, — and the identity of the entity giving the message open to question, — there was proof, to his mind at least, of the persistence of personality after death. That granted, a larger question presented itself. Accepting life to be continuous, the bee did not cease to hum as he had so long affirmed. On the contrary, — the belief in re-incarnation became almost a necessity. The pros and cons of this subject with all its ramifications were thrashed out. Mr. Saltus hated arguments. He would agree with any one on any subject rather than expend the energy to controvert them. On this subject, however, he reversed himself.

Reminding him of what he had told me about Rome, we talked it over from every angle. It intrigued his imagination more than any subject on earth.

It was at this time that Mrs. Saltus and himself, having lived separate lives under one roof to little purpose, disagreed further. Mr. Saltus

wanted her to divorce him. Thinking perhaps that she had suffered sufficiently at his hands and having had enough of matrimony, she had no desire for the divorce or for further experiments. Besides, there was the little girl — Elsie.

Loving her devotedly, although children in general bored and annoyed him beyond expression, Mr. Saltus used to quote her childish prattle with pride. A pussie cat became a 'puff-tat' because of her, and it was her tiny hands which until then had held them together.

An incident aggravating the estrangement caused Mrs. Saltus to take the little girl, and leave the apartment. Incidentally, she left his life forever. Nothing can be said to put Mr. Saltus in the right in this affair.

That wrong was not deliberate, however. He would not have harmed a hair of her head on purpose. It was the result of the one weak link in his character. As a matter of fact Mrs. Saltus had been too indulgent and forgiving. These qualities, charming in themselves, gave a

temperament such as his, an exaggerated latitude to develop the domineering and irritable nature inherent in him.

The wonder is not that Mrs. Saltus left him. It is that she remained so long. They never lived under the same roof again. Deciding that the moment had come to press his desire for divorce, Mr. Saltus followed,—found her and asked for it. His wife saw in it nothing desirable for her, and refused. Possibly she did not need a new hat, or had not heard of the Denver woman's method of getting it. She had agreed to his many wishes for the last time.

Moving from the Florence, Mr. Saltus took what remained of the old Italian olive-wood furniture, belonging to his early home in Seventeenth Street, and his books, and took an apartment in the Park Madison, around the corner from the Manhattan Club. This club had been a semi-home to him for years,—a general headquarters both to write in and to receive letters, and it offered quiet and good food as well.

Moving on short notice, his belongings were tossed into the apartment any which way, to be put into order later,—a later which never arrived. With a few books in book-cases and more piled in various corners of the living-room, the latter semi-covered by draperies which were never put to use again, and various pieces of clothing he did not need on top of this, he started in to create a new atmosphere in which to work.

The apartment was small and his furniture was massive. The vital essential was there however, for it faced the south and he had the sun all day. Permitting the maids only to make up his bed,—forbidding them under the most direful threats to attempt any cleaning or dusting of the place, lest some valuable paper or manuscript be lost or mislaid, he managed 'By the grace of God,' as he himself expressed it, to get on somehow.

Though only a step away from the Manhattan Club, few knew where he lived. In later years, with the same desire to conceal his resi-

dence, lest some one invade his privacy, he gave the Park Madison, 25 Madison Avenue, as his address. The building had been torn down then, so he was safe in giving it, and no one but those he chose to tell had the faintest idea where he lived. Door-men and bell boys of the Park Madison were bribed and threatened as before, never to let any one into his apartment or even to admit that he lived there. No hermit could have enjoyed better seclusion.

CHAPTER VII

The material for "Historia Amoris" having been put into shape for use, Mr. Saltus began to study along a new line. Puzzled and confused as to what he really believed, he agreed to study the sacred books of the East. None were omitted, — the Zend-Avesta, the Upanishads, the Vedas, the Mahabharata — with its jewel the Bhagavad-Gitâ, — the Egyptian Book of the Dead, — the Talmud and the Koran.

Between their leaves he found a new world. Thereafter he was forever digging for jewels, — which when found dazzled him with their beauty. With the enthusiasm Balboa may have felt at discovering an unknown ocean, Mr. Saltus went up the heights to the Garden of God, steeping himself in the perfume of occult and esoteric lore. Subconsciously, he had found food for his soul.

Rushing uptown to my home he would explain as soon as admitted:

"I have unearthed a gem. Listen."

Then the ideas and ideals of beauty I had so often put before him were handed back to me. Seeing them in print had made them real and impersonal. The Gitâ, which hitherto he had but dimly and imperfectly understood, after that epitomized the double-distilled wisdom of the world to him.

One phrase from the Egyptian Book of the Dead moved him profoundly and made him think along a new line. It referred to the soul in the Court of Amenti, pleading for admission to the heaven world. "I have not talked abundantly. I have not been anxious. I have harmed no heart. No one have I made weep." The last phrase cut.

"Pre-suppose," he would say, "that your dream of reincarnation is true. My God! What a debt would confront me next life! I hope it is all a myth."

It was at this time that the effects of his careless letters to the English girl came home with a shock. Rushing up to my house one evening,

white and shaken with emotion, he said that a young man had called to see him at the Manhattan Club, just as he was finishing dinner. After introducing himself as a brother of Dorothy S——, he told Mr. Saltus that the girl had, after his last letter, gone into a decline and died. He himself was not only ill, but in want, with a wife to take care of. After exhausting every effort to get employment in the States, he had reluctantly turned to the man he considered an enemy with a debt to pay.

Mr. Saltus was horrified. Put on the rack by me in no uncertain fashion,—realizing at last that what had been play to him had been a tragedy to another, he found that phrase from the Book of the Dead repeating itself. Like an embodied thing it walked by his side during the day and sat on his pillow at night, whispering in his ear during the hours of darkness, "Behold me! I am your work."

Needless to say that the brother and wife were looked after not alone by him, but by my family as well. Scourged by the episode

Mr. Saltus suffered keenly. I suggested to him after a time, more or less with a view to lift his mind from depression, that I would assist him in selecting and condensing notes on the vital points of the sacred books of the East. Mr. Saltus decided that he could compress them into a single volume. "The Lords of the Ghostland" was created in the world of thought. The actual writing of it took a comparatively short time. The preparation and condensing of the material spread over years.

Among Mr. Saltus' peculiarities was an almost prenatal fear of dogs. His mother had been terrified at them, and his childhood had been spent not only without pets of any kind, but filled with fear of them. As he grew older he became rather fond of cats, but the dog complex remained. Cats could be patted, petted and put down. Dogs on the contrary growled, and had been known to bite,—it being somewhat uncertain whether they would do one or the other—or both.

When taking his walks Mr. Saltus would go

to the extreme edge of the sidewalk to avoid a dog, if happening to be alone he had no one to interpose between him and it. Argument on the subject was useless. There was but one way of reaching him effectively. This was to ignore his fears and act as though they did not exist.

Our house was never without pets, nor were they confined to any particular spot. Drawing-room chairs were theirs or not as they fancied, and wagging tails greeted the incoming guests. No exception was made of Mr. Saltus, and no pet put aside to make place for a pampered human. When he came, he had to take things as he found them, pets included.

When I was taking a dip into Eliphas Levi, the phrase "Libertines love cats" jumped from the page. The ammunition was too good to be lost. Every time his fear of dogs cropped out, this quotation was hurled at him like a bomb. It did its work most effectively. Timidly and reluctantly at first, Mr. Saltus began to make overtures. The dogs, with unerring instinct scenting his concealed antagonism, refused to

be friends. That hurt more than a little, but it helped. The substratum of his early training began to crumble as his interest in animals and occultism increased.

Taking a phrase from the Book of the Dead, Mr. Saltus decided on the euphonious title "Lords of the Ghostland." The writing of that volume marked his transition from materialism to the realization that there were higher realms of thought as yet unexplored by him. The new book was building up on the ruins.

At the time he began writing the book I went abroad.

Believing that upon his taking the initiative and seeking a divorce, Mrs. Saltus would strike back and secure it herself, Mr. Saltus brought a suit against her, asking at the same time for the custody of his little daughter. This act being looked upon with disapproval by my family, and his friendship as more dangerous than dynamite, the ocean was hailed as a splendid moat between a skilled sheik and a young girl. It meant another summer abroad for me.

Mr. Saltus was in a state of collapse and despair. He could neither work nor sit still.

"The anchor of my life is being torn up," he exclaimed. "I cannot go on and live."

During the time which had elapsed since the summer in Narragansett Pier he had drifted away a great deal from his old friends. Barring Miss G——, with whom he dined every Sunday and saw frequently, Bob Davis, who was too busy to give him much time, and James Huneker were his only friends. The influence of Miss G—— had done much to make Mr. Saltus' viewpoint on life happier. She enjoyed the stimulus of his mind, and with unselfish kindness she introduced him to those who could further his interests and made her home a place where he could bring his mending and his difficulties. Her atmosphere was one of peace, and he sorely needed it.

That atmosphere was lacking in my home. Tolerated only because he was regarded as less dangerous within than without, he was offered neither meals nor mending. From me he

received not peace but the sword, and that sharpened and thrust into vulnerable places. His copy was criticised, his viewpoint scorned, and his personality put under a searchlight that left him seared and shaken.

In spite of all this the diet must have been full of vitamines, for he was loth to relinquish it. As he himself used to put it, "Many of the prisoners released from the Bastile returned there of their own free will, so wretched were they in a world to which they had become unaccustomed."

The fact that I was really going abroad staggered him. Imitating a cat I had at the time, he walked about the drawing-room exclaiming, "Miaw! Wow! Wow! Poor Snippsy goes crazy. Oh Wowsy wee! Wowsy wee!" To be wowsy was the last word of sadness in the vernacular of cats.

His suit for divorce failed. Mrs. Saltus, obviously aware of his motives, saw no reason to fall in with them, and the attempt was not calculated to reflect credit on himself. The news-

papers were none too kind. Any man who tries to divorce his wife is unpopular. Neither fish nor fowl, married nor free, his position was an ambiguous one, calculated to involve others in possible complications. Friends were not backward in throwing the worst light and the blackest possibilities upon the screen.

This was in 1903. In those old days children did not bring up their parents in the way they do now, — taking the center of the floor and holding forth on their right to go to the devil in the way which pleases them best. Young girls were supposed to skim lightly over the friendship of quasi-married men. Extraordinary as it may seem in these days, it was not considered proper at all. That prejudice was shared by my family.

Coming to the house the evening before I sailed, so unnerved that he could not speak for tears, Mr. Saltus put a sheet of paper in my hands. So unusual was it that the original is reproduced on the next page. It read: —

25 Madison Avenue.

In the event of my death I direct that Marie F. Giles shall have full possession in, and power over, my remains. I further direct that said remains be cremated, and the ashes given to the said Marie F. Giles.

(Signed) EDGAR SALTUS.

"There," he said, "I have written this in triplicate. One copy is in the Trust Company, and one in the hands of my attorney. It is like death—like dying rather, to have you where I cannot hear your voice. If I survive, it will be because I am convinced that nothing but death can separate us. If I die—swear that you will keep my ashes and have them buried with yours. Husbands may come and go—but I am an eternal part of you."

The paper, combined with what he said, touched me profoundly. It seemed such a hopeless muddle. Only the belief that sorrow and adversity are the soil in which the soul grows, offered consolation, and at the time even that seemed meager. No one reaches the Land

10 June 1908

25 MADISON AVENUE.

In the event of my death I direct that Marie F Giles shall have full possession in and power over my remains. I further direct that said remains be cremated and the ashes given to said Marie F. Giles

Edgar Saltus

Fac-simile of Document given to Marie Saltus

of Promise save on feet weary and blistered by scorching sand — for always it is surrounded by desert. In that emptiness and silence the ego finds the strength, poise and power to endure. We are all taken into the desert at one time or another. That alone which matters is what we bring back.

The following day Mr. Saltus was among those who saw me off. That leave-taking brought him to a realization of the verities and the non-essentials, as nothing else could have done. Letters followed like sea-gulls. They punctuated the days and haunted the nights.

My darling child: — (Mr. Saltus wrote)

It was so dear of you to have left for me a letter. To have left two. I could have kissed the postman. You are the sweetest child in the world. That is it, you see. You have made me love you so that I am helpless and hopeless without you. I am trying to be brave and work, but no Puff-tat and all work is like death. . . . . I do so hope that you are happy though missing your Snipps a little. You won't

forget me—Mowgy? It would do for me if you should. There have been days without number—nights without end—when I would give everything the world can offer for a touch of your blessed hand in mine and for the sound of your angel voice, my darling.

God bless and keep you, little girl. Always I am waiting and working for you. It must not be in vain.

All my love always. Your

EDGAR.

"Lords of the Ghostland" took on shape very slowly. Mr. Saltus seemed unable to focus his mind on anything. Well he knew that the relatives with whom I was stopping abroad had lined up a lot of eligibles,—many of whom I already knew. They ranged from an Italian Prince, with a time-worn title and a moth-eaten tumble-down palace, to an English millionaire of recent vintage. They were a job lot, accumulated to offset and counteract his influence. Anchored and handicapped by a wife and child

and a reputation none too immaculate, he saw his position with clarity, and he wrote: —

My own darling: —

There is no little Mowgy any more. No little Puff-tat to miaw and to say 'Quicksy' when you wanted anything. I say it now. For God's sake return quicksy or poor Snipps goes under. I do so hope you are happy, but don't drink champagne or dine alone with men. Remember that you are only a child, — my child, and should anything separate us it would be as if a bullet had been put through my head. Should anything happen to me you need blame yourself only for having made me love you so absolutely. Hell has no more horrors than those in which I am groping now. If I can only get the syndicate running properly and the divorce. I have said I will yield everything but alimony.

Then, dearest, we can go to London and take the little house in Brook Street you told me of. I am ill, — too ill to work any more. Don't let anything or anybody come between us unless

you want my death. Others can give you everything—everything but understanding. Trust the man to whom you are the center of the universe.

Eternamente,

EDGAR.

Careful and painstaking in the writing of letters to editors and friends, Mr. Saltus invariably wrote to me on a yellow copy pad and in pencil. In twenty years the writing against the tinted background has become indistinct, but, poor as it is, a fac-simile of one of his letters will be given. The sheets on these pads were large, and as a rule his letters covered ten or twelve of them. For the sake of brevity only the shortest are quoted, and these not in full.

These letters which poured in several at a time on every steamer, rose as a smoke between the eligibles and himself, as he expected them to do. He seemed to need me so badly. Above and beyond every other sentiment he inspired was the desire not only to protect him from the outside world—that was simple—but to pro-

tect him against the greater danger: himself and his weaknesses.

Disregarding the wishes and plans of those with whom I was stopping, November saw me on the Celtic en route for New York.

The following spring found things in statu quo. "Lords of the Ghostland" was no nearer completion and Mr. Saltus as far from free as before. Another European trip was arranged for me. I was to sail on the Celtic early in May. Once again Mr. Saltus was disconsolate, and as before the "wows" and lamentations began. Toward the last however he appeared to accept it with a great deal of philosophy. Among the crowd of "well wishers" at the boat with arms full of fruit, flowers, pillows and sweets, was Mr. Saltus. He had said good-bye the night before with surprising calmness. The lessons of the Gitâ seemed to have been absorbed at last.

Before any of the others left the boat, he got up, made a gracious and formal farewell and went away. That was as it should be. Family and friends were delighted to see him go.

Half an hour later, as the boat was making its way down the bay, from somewhere behind my deck-chair a faint but unmistakable 'miaw' pierced the vibration of the propeller. I turned. Cap in one hand and steamer rug in the other, there stood Mr. Saltus, smiling at my bewilderment.

"I am the cat who came back," he said laughing, "and I am going to sit at your side and purr for a whole blissful week, and the future can take care of itself."

Though it carried conflict and confusion into the party with me, one cannot be ejected from a ship for effrontery. The weather was perfect, the water like glass, and the sunshine uninterrupted. Mr. Saltus was so carefree and happy that he romped and played like a child. He would attempt to hide and then jump out from an unexpected place. He pretended to lose my books and find them in queer corners. He played hide-and-seek and would run up the companion-way like a boy, saying he was going to catch me by the ankles.

Upon reaching London however he found himself de trop again. From the home of Lady C——, where I was stopping, to his hotel in Victoria Street one could walk without fatigue. A taxi could make it in five minutes. With the exception however of a few formal dinners Mr. Saltus was not urged to consider himself at home there. On the contrary, he was given to understand that his presence was a decided embarrassment and that free from his influence I would probably annex one of the eligibles, who, outclassing him, he was told, in name, money and position, were always pushed to the fore.

All this he knew, but what was more important, he knew me, and the others did not. Hunting up his old rooms in Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, he re-engaged the suite he had occupied years before while writing "Mary Magdalen." Announcing that he expected to remain all summer, he put in his mornings at the British Museum studying cuneiform.

What Mr. Saltus did with his mornings did

not concern Lady C—— in the least. She was determined however that the balance of his time should be as harmless. Months before we had planned to spend our summer in Germany that year. In order that he should not conflict with these arrangements, a fortnight later saw us all in Homburg. For reasons of finance Mr. Saltus was unable to follow. He could write however, and he could send wires, and he did both rather continuously. After one of the eligibles joined our party he frequently wrote twice a day.

It was in Paris during the end of August, that he crossed our orbit again. We were stopping at the Elysée Palace Hotel, and he at the St. James and Albany. I had advised him of our plans in time.

However unwelcome he had been before, it was hospitality compared to the hostility he encountered then, when members of the Diplomatic Corps, King's Messengers and the younger sons of the nobility were welcomed. The absence of money and the existence of a

wife combined to put him in the category of undesirable things. It was an unpleasant situation all around.

To thrash it out every day was too much of a fag. It was easier to say nothing and do as one pleased, and Paris is wonderfully adapted to teas and tête-à-têtes.

The autumn found me in London with Lady C—— again, and Mr. Saltus in his old rooms in Margaret Street once more. Sitting at the table where he had written "Mary Magdalen" he tried to work as before, but the Muse had fled.

It was during this time that he first met Mr. G. F. Monkshood, who, under the name of Hatchard, embellished Piccadilly with a fascinating and unique bookshop. Monkshood it was who had brought out a small volume called "Wit and Wisdom of Edgar Saltus." In it were compiled epigrams, phrases and quotations from all of his earlier books. The subtle compliment pleased Mr. Saltus very much. He had encountered so little appreciation. Mr. Monkshood and himself were con-

genial souls. In the funereal shelter of the Blenheim Club they drank and dined and devoured one another. Added to his other accomplishments, Mr. Monkshood was a poet. Verses written to "The Lady of the Opals" and signed by himself have smiled for years from a scrapbook of mine.

The knowledge that he must return almost immediately to the States stupefied Mr. Saltus. He was like a man who had been sand-bagged. He could not speak of it without breaking down, and yet he had not the means to live there in idleness. He used to refer to this time as his crucifixion. We have to suffer terribly before we can learn how not to suffer at all. That lesson from the Gitâ we could see the beauty of and the necessity for, but we had not acquired it then. On the fly-leaf of "The Light of Asia" Mr. Saltus had written, however, "The swiftest beast to bear you to perfection is suffering."

The week before leaving was the hardest for him. He did not want to talk. He could not,

in fact. Riding on the tops of 'busses to the extreme limits of London in all directions was his only diversion. Time and again we spent a whole afternoon on one in silence.

In the middle of September Mr. Saltus left for the States. When he finally got on the boat train for Southampton he was like a man starting for Siberia for life. One thing alone comforted him. I agreed to leave Lady C—— in a few weeks and take over his old rooms in Margaret Street. It seemed to him that some emanations of his personality persisted there, and he wanted to think of me in his old haunt.

Once more letters eight and ten pages long came on each steamer, and Mr. Saltus hated to write letters. Sometimes there were cables of over a hundred words. The hopelessness of it all was acute. From every angle it was going around in circles and getting nowhere. One always returned to where one left off. Disgrace—even destruction lurking on one side: on the other, the necessity for cutting him out of my life like a cancer.

Upon his return he wrote:—

My dear darling Mowgy:

It is like death,—like dying, rather, to be here without you. I said it would be like prison, but it is worse. The sky is as blue as your own dear eyes. The weather is absolutely tropical. Were you here there would be pleasure in mere existence. But you are not here, my darling, and I seem to be able to be conscious only of that,—only that my little girl is far, far away. I have heart for nothing. Yesterday I passed the Astoria, and at the knowledge that there was no chance of seeing you there, tears came to my eyes. Never can I enter the place until you return, and now when will that be? I think you would agree to come very soon if you could realize what all this means to me. From the time I kissed you last up to this moment I have done nothing but plan for your return. From that time up to now, not for an instant have you been absent from my thoughts. It is not merely that I love you, dear; I cannot live without you. Do you

remember you asked me what I should do and how I should act were I to lose you? I told you I did not know. But, dear, I know now. It is not wholly for that reason that I want you back. It is first because I am so anxious and worried about you; second because I can do better for you here. Without you it will be as though I were dying by inches. But with you here I can work and I can win. I rather thought that I should have a line from your mother, but there was nothing. My father, by the way, who is here at the Murray Hill Hotel, will not outlive the winter, or it may be another month or two. Then, dear, in all the world I shall have not a relative,—not a tie. There will be only you. You alone, dear, whom I love alone in all the world. Come to me on the Oceanic,—cable me that you will and then not even death shall part us,

Your EDGAR.

Letters like this poured in by every steamer. One did not know what to do or how to act. His pathetic words swam before my eyes and

interposed between myself and the eligibles. In January Mr. Saltus fell ill—or said he was ill. His letters and cables became incoherent. Then they ceased. A note came to me from the physician who was attending him. In it he asked if I could tell him if Mr. Saltus had any relatives or friends who could be called upon. He painted a pathetic case. From his letter the delirium tremens looked up and leered.

The letter had its effect. Mr. Saltus followed it up with a cable saying that he expected to die. That was too much. Advising my family from Liverpool of my intentions, and cabling him at the same time, I sailed.

Mr. Saltus met me at the pier. He was looking pale and thin, but in no dying condition. It was the old story over again. There was no unpacking of trunks for me however. I was off again to Mexico City in a few weeks and he was alone as before, to continue going around in circles which ended where they began.

CHAPTER VIII

There is nothing more delightful than travel, but roaming the world like a Peer Gynt is not the same thing. Amusing at first, it finally gets on the nerves,—and living in trunks for years is highly disorganizing. The letters which followed me to Mexico City from Mr. Saltus said that his father was going downhill rapidly.

Never close to his younger son in any sense, during his last days, however, Francis Saltus turned to him more and more, relied on him and was comforted by his presence. While Mr. Saltus' letters threw out hints of coming to Mexico, where he hoped the New York Journal would find some work for him to do, —his father's unwillingness to have such a distance between them, and the real necessity for his presence within telephone distance, put an end to that. Letters of introduction were sent by him, however, to his old friend Eli Goddard,

who was then living in Cordova, and to his brother-in-law, Prince Poniatowski. Their visits to the home of my cousins were duly recorded and sent to him, but they failed to keep him in a cheerful mood.

However, the home,—the understanding, and the unselfish interest of Miss G—— did much to keep him from moods and melancholy. No woman Mr. Saltus knew up to that time was a more uplifting influence than she. Calm, dependable, her feet well on the earth, her emanations were sweet and soothing. The occasions on which Mr. Saltus saw his young daughter were holidays to him. To take her to the Plaza Hotel for tea and a chat was enough to brighten an entire week for him.

Of Bob Davis, Mr. Saltus saw quite a bit during this time. He is one of the few men whom Mr. Saltus really loved.

"Bob," he used to say, "is unique. There is no one like him. He stimulates me like champagne."

Many were the lunches and dinners they had

together. Mr. Davis was particularly fond of apple pancakes. Whenever he came to the Manhattan Club they were ordered for his especial benefit, and Mr. Saltus used to address him when writing to him as "Your Highness, The Duke of Apple-Pancake." He was lunching with Bob Davis when one of his peculiarities crept out. A number of letters and telegrams were brought to him. Never by any chance did Mr. Saltus open letters unless from the postmark or the handwriting he could be sure from whom they had been sent. That was not all,—he had to be equally convinced that they contained no unpleasant news. Letters in unknown handwriting were consigned unopened to the trash basket. If he happened to be in his rooms when sorting them, and one or more were in the doubtful class, they were tossed into a bureau drawer to be considered later. In this way he lost not only cheques but many interesting communications. People who wrote to him must have gone on wondering

why no reply was ever forthcoming. They will know now.

Letters from editors were unmistakable. They could be identified from their envelopes. My writing, and that of his closest friends, he could take in at a glance. Why take chances on the rest? What he did not know could not worry him. There was serenity in an unopened letter. Any unpleasantness in a note, however slight it might be, upset him to such an extent that he could not concentrate his mind or write a line of copy that day.

On the occasion of this luncheon with Bob Davis, Mr. Saltus took in his letters at a glance, —decided that there was nothing he cared to take a chance on, and picking them up unopened he tore the lot into fragments. In telling of it he said: —

"Bob always thought I was a bit queer. Now he must be certain that I am quite mad."

This habit, instead of decreasing, grew with the years. He had a horror of opening letters of any kind for some time before he died, —

the courage of youth having left him. After his death, his daughter and I spent two afternoons going through one of his old trunks and some bureau drawers. Hundreds of unopened letters, many with special delivery stamps on them, were opened, read and destroyed by us. Several of them contained cheques years old. It was incredible to his daughter that any one could have kept them unopened during so many years. It was a fancy to which I had become accustomed. He had not kept them because he was interested in them. He had been too much occupied and too indifferent to destroy them.

Spring came, and the summer followed. Quoting from a letter of his, Mr. Saltus wrote:

"There is green on the trees and the joy of springtime, but there is nothing in my heart but despair. When is this nightmare to end? When you were in Margaret Street I could picture you. I was a part of it all. Now it is chaos. Letters from Mexico City, from Orizaba and Cuernavaca, and the devil knows

where, tell me that you are surrounded by beauty,—the beauty of living things. Colour you say is the consciousness of nature. Only the consciousness of desolation and despair is mine."

The rainy season is the time to leave Mexico. Joining a party, among whom was a friend of Eli Goddard's, a very charming Spaniard, and still moving on like the Wandering Jew, I went north through Los Angeles and Santa Barbara to San Francisco. Spaniards are very gallant. In writing of this one I perhaps emphasized him overmuch. Telegrams of worry and warning followed. A fortnight after I reached the St. Francis Hotel a wire from Mr. Saltus read:—"My father died yesterday. Leaving for San Francisco next week. Eternamente.

SNIPPSY."

A small inheritance from his father making finances less of a pre-occupation, Mr. Saltus was free to go and come as he pleased. It was in June when he appeared at the St. Francis Hotel. Even there the shadow followed. He

was not welcomed by our little party. With an indifference and high-handedness almost amusing, Mr. Saltus turned not only the tables but the chairs upon them. He treated them like dirt, refusing to dine and finally even to speak to them. Between the lot I was like the Biblical baby with two mothers, minus a Solomon in the background.

An amusing and characteristic episode happened when he had been there but a short time. 'There was — and I believe is — a funny little restaurant in San Francisco called Coppa's. It looked like a spoonful of old England dropped there by mistake. Quaint mottoes, sketches and epigrams — the souvenirs of artistic and satisfied souls — decorated the walls. The Cheshire Cheese is something of a first cousin by comparison. Here, Jack London, Anna Strunsky, now Mrs. William English Walling, and other celebrities used to dine and linger. In that city of bohemian cafés this little place stood alone.

Mr. Saltus hated restaurants. For some

reason, the nearness of so many people perhaps, they got on his nerves. In any event, restaurants put him on edge to such an extent that he invariably quarrelled not only with the waiters, but with those who were with him, if they objected to his manner of carrying on. For this reason, it was something of a penance to go into a restaurant with him. To include him in a party going to Coppa's, one had first to proceed as follows:—

"If you go, will you be a good Snipps and not fight with the waiters?"

"I'll be a good Snipps. I'll take what you tell me and be thankful."

"Will you wear your muzzle and not jerk at the lead?"

"I'm old dog Tray — ever faithful."

"Old dog traitor — ever faithless you mean. I know your tricks, but come along then."

He came. Coppa's was almost full, but by some turn of the tables we found ourselves seated in the center of the room. That was enough to start Mr. Saltus off. Restaurants

were bad enough at best, even in a secluded corner. In the middle of a room of closely packed tables—? He began as usual.

"It's far too crowded. Mr. Me doesn't want to stay. Let's leave the others and go somewhere else."

The muzzle as well as the menu was ignored and forgotten. When Mr. Saltus began to growl it was preliminary only, but I knew the signs—knew, too, what might be expected to follow.

As he ceased speaking a sudden cramp took possession of my right foot, and my exclamation of surprise distracted his attention for the moment. It was my turn to growl. A low shoe was kicked off during the growling and the meal began. All at once a sympathetic cramp in the other foot compelled his attention to be directed to me again while the remaining shoe was removed. It may be mentioned in excuse that it was the fashion to wear ridiculously high and narrow shoes at the time.

We had gone as far as the soup, which Mr.

Saltus was sipping mechanically. As the meal progressed my difficulties did also. Try as I might, the offending shoes could not be forced on my feet again. Then the fun began. Distracted by it all, Mr. Saltus accepted chicken and salad unmurmuringly, in forgetfulness of his surroundings.

"You will have to sit here until every one goes or some one can fetch you a larger pair of ties." This remark was from one of our conservative friends, and it met with the approval of the others. Mr. Saltus was becoming restive again by this time.

"Not at all," I answered. "It's unfortunate to be sure, but get up and go I shall in my stocking feet. There is no law making shoes obligatory,—and besides, the people in this place are bohemians."

"All the more reason not to imitate them," was the reply.

That was enough to make the crowded little restaurant a most enchanting place to Mr. Saltus. Tables and people became non-existent to

him. I was going to defy the lot, and that delighted him to such an extent that good humour covered him like a garment. He even smiled at the waiters. Any show of independence on my part, provided it did not conflict with him, was a treat. Half rising in his seat he exclaimed:—

"Right you are, Mowgy. What the devil do you care for a pack of nincompoops?"

The anguish of the others in the party at being seen leaving a restaurant with a shoeless girl amused and delighted him. It could have been done quietly and unnoticed but for his love of a joke. Our friends were sufficiently horrified as it was, but for the dénouement they were quite unprepared. Realizing their discomfiture and revelling in it, Mr. Saltus made a dive under the table. That was not uncommon, for, knowing my habit of letting gloves, handkerchiefs and pocket-books fall from my lap unnoticed, he had trained himself to look. That was the old dog Tray, as he called himself. When he reappeared upon this

occasion it was with the offending shoes held before him as a votive offering, and leading the procession he carried them through the restaurant into the street. Queer people with odd fancies were no novelty at Coppa's. This however was an innovation. Some one started clapping, and with one accord the roomful of people took it up. I was laughing, but our friends were scarlet with rage. We hailed a passing taxi.

"What the devil do you care what people think?" Mr. Saltus exclaimed. "Sheep and swine follow, but you cannot make either of Mowgy,—thank God."

After that pleasurable and ingratiating episode he was not tormented by invitations from my friends. It was too bad that Anna Strunsky was not in the restaurant that evening, for she would have been amused. We had the pleasure of meeting her not long after this and were enchanted with her cleverness and charm.

Mr. Saltus' interest in spiritualism had flagged. Hearing that Miller, the materializing

medium, was holding séances in San Francisco, he determined to go. This we did. Bold in a restaurant, or when he was crushed in a crowd, where a blow from him frequently prefaced a word, he was a child when encountering phenomena of this kind. Sitting silent and almost sullen in a corner, he shrank within himself, — keen to 'see, hear and investigate, yet frightened as a baby in the dark. Miller seemed to affect him more than others had done.

"I'm frightened," he said. "If a spook should come and ask for me, — you answer it."

With clenched and clammy hands he sat and shivered, and when a 'form purporting to be that of his mother appeared and gave the name of Eliza Saltus, he whispered to me: —

"Speak."

"Speak yourself," I said. "I refuse to play the part of a phonograph all the time. It is for you, not me, that the spirit is here."

The shimmering form came closer. It almost brushed Mr. Saltus' knee. He shut his eyes and reiterated imploringly: —

"Speak, Mowgy! For God's sake speak to it!"

The shadowy form had held together as long perhaps as it could. The ectoplasm may have given out or his condition of mind influenced it. In any event the form flickered. With his eyes still closed Mr. Saltus clutched me by the arm:—

"Has it gone?" he whispered.

As he spoke the form flickered again and went out. It was a long time before he wanted to go to a séance again.

During his stay in San Francisco he was guest of honour at the Bohemian Club, and he met there many interesting people. A brief visit to Carmel-by-the-Sea brought his Californian trip to a close. The State interested him. He liked the quiet,—the almost perpetual sunshine, and above all, the absence of convention and the freedom enjoyed by everyone. It was with regret that he left the sunshine and the silence to chafe under the vibrations and noise of New York.

Once again pathetic letters raced across the continent. He had no home and no anchor. Mrs. Saltus and his daughter were living permanently abroad. His hours with the latter had been his oases in a desert of loneliness. Now, barring Miss G——, Dr. Kelley and occasionally Bob Davis, he had almost no friends. Upon reaching New York he finished a series of articles on Russia for Munsey's Magazine which later formed the basis of his "Imperial Orgy."

In the late autumn the failing health of my father recalled me to New York. Mr. Saltus was finishing the last chapter of "Lords of the Ghostland." No other book he ever wrote was strung out over so long a time, or took so many hours of research. He brought the manuscript to my home, returning the next day for the praise and patting on the back he felt that he deserved.

"What do you think of it?" he asked. The small boy always appeared at such moments.

"The King of France and twice ten thousand

men,—rode up a hill and then went down again," was the reply.

"What do you mean? Is there no climax?"

"Just that. You take the reader from protoplasm to paradise,—you lead him through labyrinths, mazes and mysteries, and leave him just where you started. If you cannot give the reader a ladder give him a straw,—but give him something."

We are all tenacious with the children of our brain, Edgar Saltus especially so, but in this instance he took the criticism willingly. That last chapter he re-wrote four times, amplifying the idea of the continuity of life and the possibility of reincarnation, which he referred to as the "supreme Alhambra of dream." What he offered then was not his belief, but a theory and a suggestion. The last chapter curiously enough was the part of the book receiving the highest praise from the critics, who with one accord said that he had struck a new and exalted note. A few years later he was wringing his hands because he could not re-write

"Lords of the Ghostland" in the light of what he then knew. Over and over again he lamented this fact.

"If I had not been so pig-headed,—so dense. Having the chance to turn out a masterpiece,—a thing that would have lived,—I passed it by. I saw only in a restricted circle, when had I but looked up, a limitless horizon of wonder and wisdom stretched before me."

CHAPTER IX

In the spring of 1907, the death of my father left me a nervous and physical wreck. Though never close friends, and knowing quite well of his disapproval, Mr. Saltus admired his splendid intellect and broad vision.

There are those who make tragedies out of trifles, and others to whom most events however important mean nothing at all. To the latter, when touched by an overwhelming grief, the world and everything in it become as shadows on glass.

Because of his sensitiveness and his supersusceptibility to suffering, Mr. Saltus was sympathetic to a degree. He had begun to see the beauty of service, and during that time he devoted himself to my family in every way that he knew how.

The autumn found me in California again,

a nervous wreck, and so ill with acute gastritis, that death seemed but hiding around the corner. With an elderly friend of the family I always addressed as Aunt, and whose interests made it necessary for her to live in California for a time, we went from place to place, settling for the winter in a bungalow at Coronado Beach. If one must die, why not peacefully and pleasantly in the sunshine?

November brought Mr. Saltus to the Coronado Hotel. He had been mapping out a plot for "Daughters of the Rich." San Diego and Coronado enchanted him.

"My next novel shall open here," he exclaimed.

So it did. The opening chapter of "The Monster" introduces the reader to the Hotel del Coronado and the bay.

The bungalow occupied by us was none too large for two women and a maid. It had however a large attic room. Mr. Saltus gave it one look, and, in his own words, "miawed at the door and begged." It looked the background

for a scribbler, with odd nooks and corners to hide manuscripts and curious old tables to write on. Once seen, nothing would do but he must have it. He declared that a djinn who lived there specialized in helping old scoundrels to scribble. I added that a horrible hourla lived there as well and that he made a practice of changing men into horned toads. (Horned toads are plentiful in Coronado.)

All this made him very insistent. California had always appealed to Mr. Saltus. It offered a special inducement then, for under the laws of the State a divorce could be secured for abandonment. He thought that a man not worth changing for a hat was not worth keeping at all, and after a year's residence he could take the initiative in the matter,—hat or no hat. An attorney was consulted and retained. California was to be his home for a year at least.

In the circumstances Mr. Saltus was very anxious to settle down. He had wandered so much, and he was tired of it. A few trunks

in an apartment hotel cannot be called a home. His popularity as a novelist had waned. Public opinion was against him, not only because of the publicity incidental to so many divorce suits, but because there had grown up and around him the belief that he was a free-thinker and lover, irritable and erratic, — a man who had few friends and a multitude of enemies.

However little he let all this affect him on the surface, Mr. Saltus was too acutely sensitive not to feel it, and it cut deep. Like a wounded animal seeking shelter, his one desire was to get as far away as he could from a world which, knowing but little of his real self, criticised and condemned him. To come in contact only with the things of nature and of beauty, — to live in the sunshine far from the haunts of men and the sordid struggle of a great city, was to him the ideal.

In view of all this, and after much cajoling on his part, and his constant reiteration that for three females, — one old, one ill and one

negligible, — a handy man about the house was a necessity, he was accepted. The prospect of Mr. Saltus being handy with anything but a pen or a knife and fork was remote. None the less, the attic shortly became his habitat, the djinn and the hourla his familiar spirits, and the plot of "The Monster" began fermenting in his mind.

It was a new world to the man accustomed for years to the limelight of publicity, and the diversions of a metropolis, to live for months on a narrow strip of sand, ministering to the wants of an elderly widow and an invalid, who at best could walk only a short three minutes to the sands at the ocean front, and spent most of her time resting in a hammock.

It must be said of him however that he came to the scratch with flying colours. Unaccustomed as he had been in his youth to look upon anything other than "Will it please me or will it not?" he began to put in practice one of life's most difficult lessons, — unselfishness. In his desire to serve another and quite unconscious

of the result, he began to build up some of the qualities in which he had been deficient so long. Having constituted himself a handy man and old dog Tray, in a place where servants are scarce as rubies, he kept burning and replenished the fire in the living-room. He also, in spite of the hours spent in using his eyes to write, would read aloud to the invalid whenever he was requested.

Strangely enough he was extremely happy in doing these things. Although the Hotel del Coronado was only a five minutes' walk from the bungalow it offered no attraction to him. Barring a daily dip in the ocean and the occasional necessity for going over to San Diego, he could not be persuaded to leave the grounds.

Winter wore away, and with the approach of spring the invalid emerged from the shadow of death; and old dog Tray remained at his post. Among Mr. Saltus' most marked characteristics were two fears,—that of losing his luggage and getting some contagious disease. In neither case could any amount of reasoning

touch him. The luggage complex put him to no end of inconvenience at times. When trunks could not be taken in a taxi, he frequently insisted upon driving with the expressman to the railway station. Then fear put out tentacles. Would the luggage be put on the train? If it was, would it be carried past its destination? Every railroad journey found him wandering like an earth-bound spirit between his seat and the luggage van. It was a form of obsession. Many a time he would greet me in the morning with the announcement: —

"I had a terrible nightmare last night. What do you suppose it was?"

"That you had lost your trunks," was the first and usually the correct reply.

"Yes, I had lost them. They de-materialized and I was wandering through the train and express vans till I went mad. Then I awoke. It was awful."

Toward the end of his life, when Theosophy had done its work for him, and he realized that all possessions are anchors and encumbrances,

this fear became modified, — but he never quite overcame it. It was the same with disease, or rather contagion. Having a horror of all forms of illness, he had the subconscious idea that if there was anything to be caught he would be in for it.

When in his last days he was so desperately ill with gastritis, he looked upon it as 'karma striking him in the face for shrinking as he had from others. Myself excepted, he rushed from people who were ill as from an earthquake.

This particular spring an epidemic of bubonic plague broke out in San Francisco. It was supposed to have been carried there by rats from China. As cats eat rats they also came under the ban of suspicion. The newspapers dripped with it. Mr. Saltus read them with horror. Ships from San Francisco might dock at San Diego. He had more nightmares. Behind him as he sought his lost luggage an army of rodents followed. There was no talking him out of it. The plague with all its attendant complications was hovering above us.

Coronado has a large winter colony as well as permanent residents,—eastern people who come in for the season and take houses. Their departure often means a number of homeless and discarded cats. Mr. Saltus was shocked by the cruelty of this. One of the vagrants with particularly long whiskers and a piteous miaw I had nicknamed "Jean Valjean." Where he slept was his own secret, but where he ate was usually out of my hand. When not referring to him by his name, Mr. Saltus called him "the table boarder," and he concerned himself not a little over Jean's well being.

Rumours of the bubonic plague changed that in an instant, and Jean became overnight the dangerous carrier of the most deadly germs, unfit for the society of humans and to be driven from the door. It was too ridiculous for argument. To have yielded an inch to Mr. Saltus in such a thing would have forfeited my mental ascendency forever, an exceedingly bad thing for him in every way. Had he been yielded to less during his formative years it

would have been a blessing both to himself and to others, and would have made possible a little yielding to him in later life. As it was, it was hazardous to give in, even if he had a certain amount of right on his side. When he had none, it was suicidal.

Laughing at his fears, ridiculing the idea of poor Jean carrying the plague, and assuring him that demons and devils were particularly immune, I refused to accept his hallucination about the cat. He was told to attend to his work and his writing, and not interfere with the running of the house.

Diplomacy was one of Mr. Saltus' strong points. He appeared to agree with me. Coming around the corner of the piazza the following afternoon however, when supposed to be on the sands, I was in time to see him with the hose in his hand, the nozzle turned so as to send a straight and powerful stream of water. This he was playing on Jean, who, terrified at such unlooked-for hostility in place of his usual

plate of food, let out piteous howls and fled up a eucalyptus tree.

Hell has no fury like a woman defied. Dropping the hose when he saw me Mr. Saltus turned,—but he had no chance to escape or explain. Seizing the nozzle I let him have it full in the face, and as he ran I followed, soaking him through and through till he got out of range. It was a tense moment. Swearing and raging, he shook himself and fled to his attic room. When he emerged, an hour later, it was with suitcases in his hand.

"After treatment like this I am going to the Hotel del Coronado, and I will send for my trunks. Never in my life have I been subjected to such an indignity. Here I am,—growing grey in your service and less than a stray cat in your eyes."

"Good-bye and good luck," I answered. "If having led two unfortunate women 'a devil's dance hasn't taught you anything you are hopeless. Had one of them played a hose on you ages ago, I would not have been obliged

to now. Don't come back for your trunks. I will send them."

That took him off his feet entirely. He had in mind a scene in which, after repentance and apologies on my part, he would graciously consent to forgive me. Incidentally it would mean the banishment of Jean. Dismissed in that way, there was nothing for him to do but go. With a suitcase in either hand he started for the hotel. Years later he told me that he had put his suitcases on the sand, and sitting down on one of them, had taken stock of himself. For the good part of two hours he sat there, till the sun dropping behind Point Loma, and the chill which followed, reminded him of the passing of time. A man can do a great deal of thinking in two hours.

Meanwhile, from the tiptop of the highest of trees poor Jean sent out frantic appeals for help and rescue. However easy it is for cats to climb trees, getting down is different. They have been known to starve to death in one. When dishes of dainties and fish failed

to dislodge him more than a limb or two lower, we realized that it was impossible for him to get down, and the maid announced that the sun was setting and the rapidly vanishing twilight called for speed. The highest kind of an extension ladder was borrowed and opened to its utmost capacity. It barely reached the limb below the one to which the frightened cat clung. The slender ladder, swaying somewhat more than was comfortable as one ascended, the tall tree and the dark combined, were not tempting. Several small boys started up very bravely but came down less so. Not one of them got half-way to the top, although I kept raising the price for valour till it reached five dollars, and the terrified Jean increased his appeals for help. There seemed to be no alternative. Putting on my riding breeches I was starting up the ladder when a voice as pitiful as Jean's cracked the silence.

"My God, Mowgy, come off that ladder!"

Mr. Saltus pushed me aside and started up. He had never been on a ladder before. With

his teeth set and three women doing their best to steady it, he finally got to the top, and by stretching his arm to the utmost caught Jean by the tail, and dropped him — not, as he intended, into my arms, but on the top of my head.

The episode was closed. The cat was saved, and by the following morning the bubonic scare transformed itself into a comedy. Descending from the djinn and the hourla of the attic, Mr. Saltus greeted me with the following limerick: —

On the sands where a blonde girl was stopping
To the rescue of Jean she came hopping,
    Waved the hose in the air —
    And said "I don't care,
If I do get my Snippsikins sopping."

"There," he said, "is an example of an anapæst. If a sprinkling can produce this, next time I will turn out an entire poem. There's nothing like water, and plenty of it, to make genius grow. Give Jean a saucer of cream.

No skimmed milk for this." Mr. Saltus laughed and resumed, "You are the first feminine thing to face me and put me to rout—My hat's off to you."

I laughed at this, it seemed so ridiculous.

"Let me tell you a story," he went on. "There was before your day a prize-fighter,—a powerful fellow,—six feet of brawn. He could knock anyone into a cocked hat in the first round. Even his friends were rather afraid of him. One day a delegation of them went to his house to suggest a new fight. His wife was opposed to this. She wanted him to accompany her on a vacation. It was she who met the friends at the door, and told them definitely that her husband was going to take a rest and would not consider their offers. They turned away, but one of the party,—a Peeping Tom sort of a chap, crept back, and looked in through a crack in the shutters. What he saw was a revelation. The prize-fighter was emerging from under the bed. The frail scrap of a wife was standing in the center

of the room, with one slender finger upraised. Shaking this she said, 'Stay where you are till they are a safe distance off. I'll kill you if you come out before.' "

This story, whether he made it up or not, amused Mr. Saltus enormously, and when thereafter, entering into the spirit of it, I would put up a finger, it never failed to make him laugh like a boy. The playfulness which had been inhibited so long had full fling now, and he adored to have me pretend I was going to chastise him for something, declaring, as he afterward put in his copy, "When a woman ceases to quarrel with a man she ceases to love him." With his almost uncanny intuition he got the motive underlying every act.

It was during this spring that the framework on which Mr. Saltus afterward built "The Gardens of Aphrodite" grew. Much of it was written when sitting in the rose garden under a palm tree, the offending Jean purring at his feet. Notes on which he constructed "Oscar Wilde, — An Idler's Impression," were gath-

ered together as well, and reminiscences used in "Parnassians Personally Encountered" were jotted down and put into shape to use.

There was something soothing and yet stimulating in the song of the surf on the sands, reaching him as it did through the branches of acacia trees. In "the enchanted garden," as he called the small green handkerchief-like patch of grass, Mr. Saltus evolved, co-ordinated and put in shape the material from which he drew largely ever after.

A few weeks later he was en route for New York, to break up such home as he had there and return to the coast with his things, having decided to make California his home indefinitely. A ranch in the middle part of the State welcomed me. It was a heavenly spot,—no neighbors within miles, and plenty of animals and flowers for company.

From that ranch came two little creatures,—one particularly, destined to have a larger place and a greater influence in Mr. Saltus' life than most of the humans he encountered.

Taken from their respective mothers at an age when their eyes were just open, so young that they had to learn to lap by nibbling my fingers dipped in milk, Fifi the kitten and Toto the shepherd dog puppy were annexed from a neighbor, and given to one ready to shield them with her life.

In the late summer these little ones with Auntie and myself were settled again. This time it was in a large house in Los Angeles with a delightful garden, situated in what was then the extreme upper limit of the city. Beyond it were vacant fields. Hollywood was in the distance. It was taken with a view to giving Mr. Saltus a bed-room with study adjoining in a wing of the house, off by itself, and shortly after we moved in, he joined us.

Mr. Saltus was not an easy, if an interesting man to keep house with. 'Ringing of the telephone sent him almost into hysterics. Trades people and servants talking under his windows incited him to murder.

The sound of a vacuum cleaner was the last

straw. Waving his arms like a dervish he would appear in working attire,—hair on end, light blue flannel shirt open at the neck, and make what I called a few "cursery remarks." Late in the afternoon only, when he left the house for his walk—he did not care what transpired during his absence—could the maid get in to make up his rooms. Even then he accepted it because he was compelled to submit. His study was as closely guarded as a Bluebeard's den. No one entered it—and no one wanted to, for cigar butts and ashes were the rose-leaves scenting his sanctum.

When working on a novel Mr. Saltus was living in another world. He knew where his things were, but no other, unless possessed of second sight, could have hazarded a guess. Under cigar butts, half burned cigarettes, piles of manuscripts, note-books and pencils, which were scattered all over the floor, anything might be hidden, and often was. Until he had finished a novel or other prolonged work, any attempt at clearing up would have

been fatal, not only to himself but to the sanity of the one who did the cleaning. With the knowledge that most literary men were "litterers" the room was divested of anything which could be injured before it was turned over to him.

Unfitted for housekeeping both by temperament and inclination, and having none of the responsibility of it, I could look on and laugh. In later years the laugh was not quite as spontaneous.

In spite of the extreme untidiness of his study, Mr. Saltus was scrupulously particular about his person, changing his linen several times a day after a tub and a shower. In fussing over his linen he was almost as fearful as over losing his luggage or getting a disease. Whenever the laundryman was late in arriving he was sure that it was lost forever. His worry was not so much over replacing the things, as over the fact that to do so he must go into a shop. Linen and luggage fears arose from the same cause.

The laundry terror persisted also until the end of his life. All these peculiarities must have been trying to normal women. He recognized it himself fully, and used to say:—

"I'm a panicky pup, and I know it; and only a pampered puss could put up with me. If she should turn me out I'd go 'round and 'round in circles like a mad dog till some one took me to the pound and dropped me in the lethal chamber."

CHAPTER X

Deprived of pets as he had been during his childhood, Mr. Saltus responded to his new playmates in a surprising way, taking over their education, as he called it, from the first. Fifi was taken into the inner recesses of his study to serve as a paperweight. Rigging up a tight-rope in the garden, he taught her to walk on it, to stand on her hind legs, play ball and jump through a hoop.

When his eyes became tired with writing he amused himself hour after hour playing with his new toys. With his fancy for alliterations Fifi became "Pasy's pride and pleasure Puss." In the album of snapshots are many of "E——— and his angels," as I called them.

Then a sad thing happened. From eating some poisoned meat put out for gophers by a neighbor, both little creatures became violently ill, and in spite of the best doctors and care, Fifi

died. I did not mourn alone. Mr. Saltus wept like a baby and could not write a word for days. Until the end of his life he kept referring to her, imitating the inflection of her miaws when deprived of sardines, of which she was inordinately fond.

After this the puppy came in for all the attention. During her recovery from the poison she was brought up to sleep on the foot of my bed,—a habit she saw fit never to change, for she slept there for the rest of her life.

With a patience little expected from him, Mr. Saltus taught her to run a yard or two in front of him so that he could watch her, and taught her to walk on her hind legs and various other accomplishments. With the training and understanding of her, the fear of dogs left him. He began to pat strange animals on their heads and take an interest in work in their behalf. The puppy, Toto, went with him for walks as soon as she was able to toddle on before him, but she usually returned in his arms.

The reason for entering so fully into his habits and association with this little being is because, like a thread of pure gold, she was woven into the fabric of his existence from the first, becoming at the last one of the most vital considerations of his life.

During a brief stay in Pasadena the year before, I had made the acquaintance of a Mr. and Mrs. Colville. The former was an exceptional character, combining the enthusiasm of a scholar and the erudition of a sage. He was a critic, a philosopher and a Theosophist. His wife was, and is, one of the noblest and most selfless beings on earth.

This acquaintance was passed on to Mr. Saltus. From the moment he saw them they exercised a profound influence on his life. Inclined as he was to take the tempo of his likes and dislikes from me, his immediate admiration for these two was exceptional. The occultism to which he had hitherto listened with rather indifferent ears took on new interest. He bought "The Ancient Wisdom," by

Annie Besant, the "Secret Doctrine," and a number of other Theosophical books. What was more, he studied them.

The little bungalow of the Colvilles in Pasadena became a kind of magnetic pole. To discuss higher metaphysics and occultism with the husband, and observe its practical application by his wife, constituted a treat. Mrs. Colville could tear Mr. Saltus to pieces. She could put her finger on the weak links in his character, suggesting methods by which they might be strengthened with unerring intuition. He not only accepted it with the simplicity of a child, but he thanked her for it. Never in his life had he met a woman of her kind before, and he loved her for her selflessness and the poise she radiated. His confidence and trust in her were such that on the day preceding his death he urged me to write to her and ask her to take him into her meditations. With all that may be said against Mr. Saltus by his critics, the fact of his not only recognizing, but immediately responding to spiritual greatness

justified the confidence put in him by myself when a child. It proved beyond question, that with a different early environment and training, he would have developed the splendid qualities latent until the end of his life.

Work upon "The Monster" was under way at this time, and over his books Mr. Saltus was very much like a mother with her child. He might suggest that a novel of his own was full of flaws,—but woe to the outsider who ventured to criticise so much as a comma in its construction. It gave him perhaps the shock of his literary life, when, after a discussion, Mrs. Colville said to him:—

"You are a brilliant man,—an artist and a stylist. You are a poet, an historian and an essayist; but a novelist—never. Your psychology of humans is oblique, your plots improbable when not impossible, and your characters ink."

In moments of wrath I had flung the same words in his face and been told, "Ignorance, when it speaks, speaks loudly."

Instead of the explosion I expected, it took Mr. Saltus off his feet. He sat down. His affection and admiration for the Colvilles could not be called in question after that, and he began at once to take stock of himself seriously.

The lease of the house we were occupying having expired, another one on Grand View Street off Westlake Park was taken. The beauty of this little park, and the pleasure of sitting out under the palm trees, book in hand, Toto lying at his feet, soothed and relaxed Mr. Saltus amazingly. The idea of rewriting "The Monster" and weaving Theosophy into it suggested itself. Mrs. Besant spoke in Los Angeles at this time and we attended a private lecture. He heard her speak many times again in London in the Queen's Hall, but from that first glance he declared her to be in his estimation the most wonderful woman incarnate on earth today. "The Monster" was put aside in order that he might have more leisure to study Theosophy.

Mr. Saltus was now in his fifty-fifth year, and

for the first time he began to show symptoms of breaking. Extreme irritability with attacks of giddiness were followed by periods of depression. His Theosophical studies helped him to keep his poise. The physician who was consulted gave no cause for alarm. He said that Mr. Saltus was undergoing certain physiological changes and that he must abstain from prolonged mental work. A rough draft of "The Monster," including a certain amount of Theosophy, was in hand, so he said he would do no more creative work for a time.

That time was a long one. Mr. Saltus never did any entirely original work again. His creative faculty became semi-detached from his work in a desire to study. He wrote several novels after the lapse of years, but each of them was elaborated and improved from central situations he had used before either in novels or in short stories. In many of these, as in "Lords of the Ghostland," Mr. Saltus felt that he had not made the most of his material, and the desire to re-write, amplify and do jus-

tice to the subject in a new and big way was tucked away in a corner of his mind. During the last years of his life, when the necessity for finding forgetfulness of the physical was paramount, the opportunity to use this material presented itself.

At the end of that summer we went on to Warner's Hot Springs. Mr. Saltus was left at loose ends, and he went to a hotel, hoping to join us again when we decided on a house for the winter.

While we were at the Hot Springs Mr. Saltus met a young girl, Miss S——. So weird, wild and fantastic are the stories which have been circulated about her, so malicious and untrue, that in justice to all, a plain statement of the facts is called for. It was during this stay at Warner's Hot Springs that a letter from Mr. Saltus referred to meeting a young girl. So seldom did he meet anyone sufficiently worth mentioning that I was interested. In the letter he said that he had been introduced to a girl, Miss S——, who reminded him very much

of myself. This was, he explained, not only because of her features but her nature, which was highly emotional, and that she adored animals to such a degree that I would find in her a kindred soul. I was much interested and wrote him that I would like to meet her.

Mr. Saltus' next letter was from San Francisco, where, at the request of the Examiner, he had gone to write up the Portola Festival. His next letter, however, was from Los Angeles again, giving the news that the Los Angeles Examiner had retained him to write a series of editorials to boom Southern California. Urging us to return, he said that he could not work without a background and was like a man without arms or legs. Telegrams and long distance telephone messages followed.

Soon afterward we took a house in Los Angeles again, centrally located in what was then a fashionable location in Pico Heights, and Mr. Saltus got to work at once. It was neither sustained nor creative like that of writing a novel. It consisted in compiling information

and statistics and presenting them in entertaining and acceptable form. The final draft of "The Monster" was done and ready for the typist. The compiling of material for two-page editorials each week kept him so occupied that his usual afternoon walks with Toto were shortened or neglected altogether. All his life he had walked a great deal. It was his way of keeping fit. With the physiological change in his constitution his desire to walk decreased, and the beginning of the breakdown began without either of us suspecting it. An inveterate smoker always, he then consumed almost twice as many cigarettes a day as before,—strong Cuban ones of the most insidious kind. This, too, was paving the way for the obscure and deadly disease which later gripped him like a vise.

Up to the time of going to California to live, Mr. Saltus' life had, in spite of its colourfulness, been more or less sad. There was a wistfulness in his eyes,—a reaching-out for something stronger than human ties to build on.

The note-book to which I have previously referred, and which he compiled for writing "The Philosophy of Disenchantment" and "The Anatomy of Negation," was filled with quotations from the Gitâ. This meant something deeper than copy to him. Upon meeting Mr. and Mrs. Colville, the inner yearning which had been inhibited so long became suddenly objective, taking on the concrete form of study along esoteric lines.

All this time he was studying "The Secret Doctrine," going over each stanza slowly, thoughtfully, weighing each word and its meaning — searching for gold.

He burst into my room one day without knocking, — a thing he never omitted to do. I realized that only an internal earthquake could have caused such forgetfulness. Throwing a book into my lap, he sank into a chair and exclaimed: —

"Blind, — blind and conceited ass that I have been! All my life I have been searching for

truth. Now I have found it. Life's problems are over."

Taking the book from my hand he said:—

"Listen to this. 'Said the Flame to the spark, thou art myself,—my image and my shadow. I have clothed myself in thee,—and thou art my vahan, until the day be with us, when thou shalt re-become myself,—and others thyself,—and me.'"

He read the stanza three times very slowly, his emotion so intense that tears stood in his eyes. At that moment he touched the highest pinnacle of his life. It was his Mount of Transfiguration. As soon as he was sufficiently master of himself to speak, he said:—

"Let me send your name and my own this very day to Adyar to join the Theosophical Society?"

I had never been affiliated with organizations or cults,—my understanding of the occult having been more or less born with me and intuitive rather than academic; but, delighted at the

unfolding of his higher nature, I agreed at once to his suggestion.

He saturated himself with Theosophy as one might with a disinfectant after long exposure to infection. From that hour he was another being; his perception of values and his attitude toward life became readjusted. The polarity of his angle on everything shifted, and the axis of his being, responding to the change, swung back to its real home. It was like melting the ice of Spitzbergen and restoring to it the tropical beauty and verdure it once enjoyed. In this way Mr. Saltus became imbued with the magnitude of his discovery — or rather his recovery of it.

It has been said by his critics, that, in becoming a Theosophist, Mr. Saltus stepped down from the Olympian heights, became mundane, and did not, as I have suggested, ascend the Mount of Transfiguration. Constructive criticism of any description is helpful, but it is open to question whether or not this touches the crux of the matter. The fact that his imagina-

tive faculty became somewhat transmuted into channels not wholly literary, gives critics this chance.

It has been said that I persuaded him to become a Theosophist. Nothing is further from the truth, for, while I believed much that is called Theosophy, I had scarcely dipped into a book on it, and our chats on these lines had been more or less personal, one saying to the other, "Perhaps we were brother and sister or twins in our last life," suggesting various amusing combinations of relationship.

I never tried to persuade him to accept anything. It would have been not only foolish and futile, but would have defeated its purpose.

Though his acceptance of it came suddenly, it was the culmination of remote causes, too deep for either his critics or his friends to see.

It has been said also of Tolstoi that when he turned to religion he turned from greatness. This may be true in a sense. It resolves itself into the question "What is greatness?" That Mr. Saltus' keen interest in occultism over-

shadowed and coloured every act and thought of his life thereafter, is undeniably true; but what it took from him in one sense it gave to him in another. It gave him what he had been unconsciously seeking,—the ability to build up a series of sequences in his mind, and in the acceptance of them to find peace. Peace and progress were his pole stars. Who can say how little or how great are such objectives? If any change took place in his creative potentialities, it was because he deliberately allowed it.

From that hour a new world opened before his eyes, a world of endless vistas,—of delightful study and research,—of new thinking, reconstruction and regeneration, Mr. Saltus' one lament being:—

"Why has it taken me so long?"

Destroying the finished copy of "The Monster," he set about rewriting it entirely from his new viewpoint, and thereafter until the day of his death he wrote nothing untinged by the philosophy that had become an essential part of his consciousness.

This new and complete distraction was a godsend, for Mr. Saltus was far from well and he was inclined to be terrified over the least symptom of anything out of the common. Abstract reading and study took him out of himself and bridged many an hour with pleasure and profit.

Coming in the house one day Mr. Saltus said:—

"When I was down-town I charged a box of sweets on your bill."

"Did you?" I replied. "Since when have you developed the taste?" Puddings and candies of any kind he had always avoided.

"They were not for myself but for the young girl, Miss S———, I wrote you about. She is now connected with the Library and I see quite a little of her, for I go there often to get books and collect data for my articles. Having been educated abroad she speaks French like a native, and being unusually intelligent she has helped me a great deal."

Occupied as I was at the time with organiz-

ing a theatrical entertainment for the benefit of The Los Angeles Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,—having to see and secure all the talent, I put off an invitation to bring her to the house for tea or to dine until the affair was over. Unfortunate omission! More unfortunate yet was my remark:—

"Remember Dorothy S——."

That was an episode Mr. Saltus wanted least of all to be reminded of. It sealed his lips more effectually than cement. When a few weeks later I inquired about his friend, he said that she had moved and that he had no idea what had become of her. Moved she had, but only a block or two. Once again his inability to face anything holding the remotest possibility of unpleasantness tangled him in an unnecessary deception.

During the holidays a telegram announcing the death of Mrs. Saltus in Paris reached him. This was only a few days before the preliminary papers in the divorce were to be issued.

In all justice to Mr. Saltus it must be said

that he sincerely regretted the final separation came this way. It hit him between the eyes. From his new angle on life,—his belief that, re-incarnation being a necessity, he must meet every ego he had in any way wronged and pay his debt to each, appalled him. However much he had attempted to justify himself in the past he did so no longer. The sudden passing over of one so closely connected with his early life—to whom he realized that he had never been all that he should—struck home. He went about the house softly and silently, passages of the Gitâ penetrating him like flame and steel.

His first impulse was to go East to meet his young daughter upon her return from abroad. The memory of her had become a beautiful dream to him. From that dream he was most anxious to awake and enjoy the reality. Her mother's wishes had been very explicit in the matter. She left the little girl to the guardianship of an aunt, with provisions in her will calculated to curtail the young girl's best inter-

ests in case her father took her. Over and over we thrashed the matter out between us. He had the law of the land on his side.

Persuaded at last that the only restitution he could make the mother for anything she had endured because of him, was through the child, he wrote his daughter asking her desire in the matter. Upon her replying that she wanted to carry out her mother's wishes, much against his will, Mr. Saltus yielded.

There was another thing he yielded also. Against my firm refusal to go to the altar or the courthouse until a proper time elapsed, he talked in vain.

"Contending with you is like biting into granite," he said with annoyance, "and my poor teeth are being worn away."

"It is harder to be the granite," I told him. "I would be so much happier transformed into pliable putty."

"Why not try it for a pleasant change?" he inquired.

"Because, for your sake, I cannot. You are

not granite to me,—you are a piece of marble out of which I am trying with chisel in my hand to release the something concealed there."

"Your chisel is sharp and the process is a painful one."

"So it is," I admitted, "and I do not know to which of us it is the more so. Shall I put it down and rest?"

Mr. Saltus smiled.

"No, little Puss. You are the instrument of karma. Keep on chiseling. You believe in me, and if you think there is something worth while, awaiting release—do not falter. Only the one who sees it can set it free."

CHAPTER XI

Made irritable by the state of his health, accentuated by the delay in his plans, Mr. Saltus was in a mood to fly off at a fleabite. One does not realize the underlying cause of things at the time they occur. It takes perspective to throw them into relief.

Los Angeles, which never does anything by halves or in a small way, was undergoing one of its periodical hydrophobia scares. As a matter of fact, this disease is almost non-existent in the State of California. No matter about that. Some poor half-starved, beaten and abused animal driven to extremity had turned in self-protection upon a tormentor, and the cry went up that a mad dog had bitten a child. That was enough. The papers, always on the lookout for a sensation, took it up, piling on the agony, till in twenty-four hours they had created a monster out of a myth.

Results showed how slight after all has been man's evolution from ignorance and brutality. All unmuzzled dogs were ordered to be shot in the streets on sight. Civilized England would believe such a thing possible in equatorial Africa only. Protests were powerless. The people having been worked into a frenzy of fear, it was not easily allayed. What followed is too harrowing to be told. Had a few fanatical humans, and the owners of the unmuzzled dogs been put painlessly and permanently out of the way, real justice would have been served. Our Toto, guarded every moment night and day, was the exception. The incinerators were kept working all the time disposing of the innocent and helpless victims of mad—men.

Because of these conditions several stray dogs were given temporary shelter under my roof, and kept on a veranda giving off of my bed-room, situated on the second floor. A passing policeman could not reach up to them and they could wag their tails in safety.

How it happened, if ever known, I have for-

gotten,—but it happened. One of the dogs, a bull-terrier, managing to slip from the veranda and through my bed-room to the hall, went down stairs on an exploring expedition. Coming in that evening with his latch-key Mr. Saltus met the dog at the front door. The animal, grateful for food and protection, came forward to take a sniff of the intruder and ask his intentions. Had Mr. Saltus spoken to him and gone on naturally, as one belonging there should have done, there would have been no trouble. His old fear of dogs gaining momentary ascendency, combined unfortunately with his annoyance at having so much attention diverted from himself. Without a word he gave the dog a kick. According to canine philosophy a man having the right to be there would not have done such a thing. That act settled his status. The terrier caught him by the leg and made his protest felt, in his desire to protect the one who had rescued him.

There was no uncertainty of Mr. Saltus'

intentions then. Screaming and cursing, he tore up to my sitting-room.

"One of your damned dogs has taken a slice out of my leg."

The story of the dog and his deviltry was told between vituperations. He was done for. Hydrophobia was sure to develop before morning. The dog must be sent to the pound at once. As I have said before, there could be no half way in dealing with Mr. Saltus. Had he been sympathized with in the least, it would have been fatal. It was a nerve-racking affair. Useless was the attempt to put it to him from any angle other than his own. Not only had he been badly lacerated, but outrageously treated by me in that his demands were not immediately acted upon. Refusal to see in him a martyr, piled faggots on the flame of his wrath, and vowing that either the dog or himself should leave the house that night, he threw the challenge in my face.

There was no need to repeat it. A telephone was on the table near my hand. I called

a taxi, telling them to be at the house in half an hour. After that inferno was let loose. Nothing more outrageous was included in the annals of crime.

"Here I am,—growing grey in your service,—turned into the street. I am an IT,—a THING,—my individuality has been submerged. You have grafted all your ideas upon me, moulding me into your likeness. I am not allowed to think."

"If you are moulded in my image it's a devilish botch I have made of it. Had you been moulded into something human a little earlier in life, you could not have wrecked existence for the two women rash enough to take your name. I have escaped with my sanity,—thank God. Now go."

Storming and swearing at the way he was abused, Mr. Saltus disappeared, returning after fifteen minutes with a suitcase in either hand. The dogs sat in a row to watch him go.

"I'll come back for my trunks and my books

to-morrow," he told me, "and I would like to know your plans for the future."

"Inasmuch as they no longer include yourself they cannot interest you," I said. "When you leave this house you leave my life forever."

It was hard to say that to one who, however inflammable and vituperative on the surface, was at heart only a very much spoiled and frightened little boy, long accustomed to giving orders and carrying things with a high hand. A reversal of the order took him out of his bearings. Only a profound understanding of his nature made the success of the experiment possible.

Slamming the door behind him he left the sitting room and went down stairs. The taxi was waiting. Reaching the garden he turned to look back at the house, only to see the shades drawn down, the lights in my sitting room go out, and hear my voice through the French windows saying:—

"Come, my lambs! Come, Toto! You are all that I have in this wicked world."

After that there was silence. Then came a hum of voices from outside and the taxi drove off. With a fair certainty of what the dénouement would be, I kept on a wrapper and lay down on the sofa to rest. Nearly an hour passed. Then the dogs on the veranda began to bark. This said volumes. It said in dog language that some one was entering the house. Soon after there was a creaking noise in the hall. Then silence again. Sniffing a friend, Toto, who slept in my room, went to the door and whined.

"Come back," I called; "there must be a burglar in the house. I will telephone to the police."

After that announcement there came a gentle tap on the door, and a voice whispered: —

"Please let me in for a moment. I want to speak to you once more."

Switching on the lights I opened the door, and Mr. Saltus came in.

"Forgive me, little girl," he said. "I'm a devil. I'm all you say I am, but I have not

wrecked your life, Mowgy. If I am less to you than a dog you never saw till yesterday I have failed,—totally failed. All the same I have never wanted anything but to see you smile. Try me again."

By that time there were two of us weeping, with Toto jumping up upon us licking our hands; taking on, as she did, our vibrations as might a delicately constructed instrument.

The following day I went to Mr. Saltus and said:—

"I'm dreadfully sorry over what occurred last night, and while there is no possible danger I want you to have your wound attended to."

"Don't worry over that," he said. "I had it cauterized this morning. Anyway, it did its work. That poor dog was trying to protect the house. He and I are on the same job and we will make friends."

They made up, and to such an extent that when after a few days a home was found for

the stray, Mr. Saltus had to be persuaded to let him go.

Neither Mr. Saltus nor those nearest to him realized that his nervous system was undergoing a change. Had this been recognized, the episode which followed would in all probability never have occurred. Mention of it is made because a great deal was said about it at the time, it being given out that Mr. Saltus had tried to kill me. This episode, unpleasant as it is, marked the last time that he ever lost control of himself.

It began in the dining-room after dinner while Mr. Saltus was enjoying his usual cigar. Some chance remark,—a hasty answer, more fuel, and the fuse was fired. Once again he was an It,—a Thing,—a submerged entity, deprived of his child and acting as a nursemaid to dogs. The more I tried to soothe him the more vehement he became. Distressed beyond words Auntie left the room and went upstairs, declaring that she would pack her things and leave the house the next morning, and that we

could fight it out and find each other out,—she was done. Repeated efforts to calm him had only the contrary effect. To leave him alone for a time seemed the only solution. Picking up the leash to fasten it to Toto's collar, with the idea of going for a walk while Mr. Saltus cooled down, was misunderstood by him. Seizing a carving knife from the serving table, and pulling the leash suddenly out of my hands, he dragged Toto behind him into the butler's pantry and locked the door. It was the cook's evening off. From his place of security he announced that he was going to cut Toto's throat and then his own. Turning on a faucet so that the water would trickle ever so slightly and suggest the dripping of blood, he became silent.

Had I argued or pleaded with him one cannot know what the result would have been. Silence on my part,—silence absolute and unbroken,—was the only course. A more horrible half-hour than that, Dante and Goya together could not have imagined. At the end

of that time the door opened and Mr. Saltus, with Toto wagging her tail behind him, reappeared. Relief at knowing that a tragedy was averted was such that I could only sink into a seat. Thereupon, possibly because I had said nothing, Mr. Saltus picked up tumblers and decanters from the sideboard and smashed them against the walls like so many eggshells, still vowing that he was going to kill himself. While in the pantry he had, instead of cutting his throat, consumed a whole bottle of gin. That strengthened his arm and his courage.

To leave him in such a condition would have been brutal. To remain was hazardous, for he brandished the knife and went on screaming. The night wore on, and the effects of the gin began to change their character. Deciding the time had come for a determined stand, I went up to him, and took the knife out of his hand. In his amazement at my effrontery he offered little resistance, although he still screamed of his wrongs. It was no time to argue. Neighbours hearing the racket tele-

phoned to the police that a lunatic was in the house and was trying to kill some one. An officer was sent to the door to inquire. That had a sobering effect. Kicking the broken glass out of his way Mr. Saltus finally decided to go to his room. By this time the sun was rising (not setting) upon his wrath.

At noon I went to consult our friend Dr. Hazeldine, a metaphysician as well as a physician, and he returned with me to the house. Mr. Saltus, he said, was in a very critical condition. Unable to eat, thrashing about in his bed like a spirit in torture, he presented a tragic picture, and the doctor decided to remain at the house until he could bring him around. This he did; but when the bringing was accomplished, bag, baggage and dog, I left the house, and saying "Good-bye forever," went down to San Diego.

That was more effectual than the visit of the police had been, knowing as he did that threats were not in my line. Letters and telegrams followed like shadows of sin. They were

answered, but in no way to offer encouragement. Clearly and firmly he was told that his conduct justified much that had been said against him, and though two women had escaped with their lives and sanity a third would be walking into a padded cell and taking on a life sentence voluntarily.

The reaction on Mr. Saltus was serious. He became really ill and his letters frantic. A novice still in Theosophy, accepting its theory of life, but ignoring its personal application, this lapse of his acted like an auger. It cut its way into the center of his consciousness, and in the realization of his failure, there was stimulated the dormant aspiration to re-create himself. A page from one of his letters is indicative of this:

". . . . *De profundis clamavi.* Don't make me die insane. In writing to you I have said everything that a human being can. If there was an assurance unexpressed it was through no fault of mine. Your answer was that your faith in me is shattered. I once said that if you

had a child by a negro I would forgive you and console you too. Yet your faith in me is shattered. Child———child,—you are not to blame. If after all my love and care of you, you could write me that, it is because I have in the past betrayed the faith of other people. No,—you are not to blame. You are my own hands striking me in the face. As I measured it to others it is meted now to me. I may be your cross but you are crucified to me, and death alone can tear the nails from your hands. Even then it will leave the stigmata."

It was a difficult situation to cope with, for what he said was quite true. The ties which bind one to another are spun out of threads like cobwebs,—so gossamer in texture, so frail and unsubstantial, that they seem a thing one can brush aside with a touch. They are so fine,—they appear to have emerged from nothing,—a memory, an incident, a sorrow shared and forgotten,—but they persist. Delicate as they are, they are spun from the center of one's being. Turned, twisted and plaited

by the hand of fate, they become cables of steel. Reason may tell one they can be broken, but the soul knows better. Nothing in life can tear them completely asunder.

It was one of these frail threads which held now. Stronger ones by far, fashioned during the years, were there, but they fell apart. It was the frailest one which persisted. On the walls of memory was a picture. It was that of a man sitting on the top of a 'bus, sad and silent at the thought of returning to the States in a few days. It was early evening and we were going out to the extreme end of London,—Muswell Hill,—to compel distraction from the thoughts which pressed upon him from all sides. The 'bus was crowded, and we could not get a seat together. Mr. Saltus' however was directly behind my own, so we could talk to one another. Going up the hill toward Islington the 'bus swayed a bit, and I found myself swinging from side to side. In so doing a slight pull seemed to come from behind. Looking down I saw that Mr. Saltus was leaning for-

ward and holding a piece of my frock in his hands. He was unaware that I noticed it, nor did we ever refer to it later. It was such a little thing. Nothing worth speaking about, but it was his hand on the fold of my frock that held, —had held during the years, and held now.

When he wired that he was following to San Diego I was silent and let him come. It was then he realized how totally alone he was in the world, and how dependent also. My home was broken up and we were both wanderers. Though we were living at different hotels and I refused to discuss the matter with him, Mr. Saltus' conversation was directed to me through Toto.

"Come here, Toto," he said. "I didn't really hurt you, did I? I'm not always a devil. I have intervals of goodness. Go 'woof, woof' to Mummy and tell her I will go and die if she throws me into the ashcan."

This was followed by a series of "wows" and the remark:

"Don't give Snippsy up to the dog-catchers.

Snippsy likes to be a subordinate entity. He isn't happy otherwise."

He was miserable and sincere, but self-preservation is a difficult thing to fight. The upshot of it was that Mr. Saltus agreed to go East for a month or two, leaving me in California to get my nerves in shape again. He was on probation, or, as he expressed it, "saved from the pound."

It was horrible to see him go, and yet we both needed perspective, being too excited to act or even think sanely, as the episode over Toto had made clear. Two highly temperamental people, no matter how devoted to one another, act and react at times to their mutual disadvantage.

Standing beside the Los Angeles Limited, which was to take him back via Chicago, Mr. Saltus slipped an envelope in my hand. Upon opening it a letter enclosing a poem fell out. That poem, under the title of "My Hand in Yours," was published later.

As Mr. Saltus discovered on the train, our

minds had been working along similar lines, for I had slipped letters in various pockets in his coats and others in satchels, to cheer him at intervals on the return trip.

CHAPTER XII

To New York Mr. Saltus went, returning to San Diego in less than three months. He was still thin and nervous and had done no writing at all. In the interval, the penetrating influence of his philosophy had done its work, and he was taking the matter of his own evolution seriously. Allusions to Jean or the incident of the broken glass, were like burning raw flesh.

It was mid-winter when he returned, but no one would have suspected it from the June-like sunshine and roses. Taking long walks with Toto, with whom he loved to play hide-and-seek, he would go off for hours, resting in Balboa Park on the return trip.

In speaking of this afterward to Miss G——, she said that Mr. Saltus had looked so ill upon his return to New York that she thought he was in for a nervous breakdown. In the circumstances, the peace and quiet of San Diego were very restful to him.

Then the question of the future presented itself again, and he asked:—

"When are you going to absorb me?" That was the way he jestingly put it. And then he asked:—

"Where shall we live?"

"California or London," I told him. "If one could combine the attractions of the two,—the climate of the former and the culture and comfort of the latter, heaven would not seem so vague a place. Take your choice, but New York—*jamais!*"

Mr. Saltus hated New York also,—hated clubs, although one had been more or less his headquarters for years. The old members of it were all dead, and he was not a man to make new friends. Barring the convenience of a club it was a horror to him. It was then agreed that he should return to the East, arrange his affairs and meet me in Montreal, where we would take the leap into matrimony and sail to England direct.

An incident occurred toward the end of

March, shortly before Mr. Saltus left for New York, which indicated, more than anything else, how radical had been the change in him. We were invited for tea at the home of a friend, Mrs. Butler. As her home was at a distance from the center of the city it was decided that I should take a trolley, while for the benefit of the exercise, Mr. Saltus would walk with Toto. Before separating however, he accompanied me to the fifth floor of a shop, where I made a few purchases. Reaching the street I left him with the assurance that he would rejoin me again in twenty minutes at Mrs. Butler's house. Toto, as usual, was a few feet in front of us, and, as it afterward developed, was unaware of the exact spot where we divided forces. It was over in a minute. I jumped into a trolley and disappeared.

Mrs. Butler's was reached. The twenty minutes doubled and redoubled, yet look as one might no sign of man or dog could be seen. That something had happened,—to the dog most likely,—seemed probable. It was a tense

waiting. The rapid twilight of the south was closing like a fan, when, silhouetted against the distant skyline, a pygmy, preceded by an animated dot, developed into a man and a dog.

It was a tale with no wag that he poured into my ears.

"When you left and jumped into the trolley," he said, "I became suddenly aware that I was alone. Toto had vanished. Inquiries were futile and fruitless. No one had seen her. She appeared to have dematerialized in a flash. I went to both the hotels and to all the places where we were in the habit of stopping. The result was the same."

"And what then?"

"I stood in the middle of the street and wowed. I was sure that Totesy Babe had been killed or stolen. It was horrible. I could not face you alive."

It would have taken courage without a doubt.

"What did you decide to do,—run away?"

"No,—I thought of that, but to run, meant

out of your life. To return without Toto would amount to the same thing. It was a case of 'Which way I fly is hell . . . . Infinite wrath and infinite despair.' There was no alternative but the Bay for me. Living, even if I remained in your life, Toto would have stood forever between us. Dead, you would think kindly of me and mourn for me also. It was the lesser evil."

"And then?"

"It seemed too bad to be true. A last hope remained. Returning to Marston's where we had separated, I questioned the door man. Yes, he had seen a black and white dog going in alone over an hour ago. The elevator man came next. He had let a dog off at the fifth floor, supposing she accompanied a customer. The mystery became less opaque. Toto was sitting under the counter where she had seen you last. The shop was closing and the assistants were puzzled what to do, as she refused to move and bared her teeth when any one came near her."

There was no faking his seriousness. Mr. Saltus was in a state of collapse. The way he reacted to this episode made whole the broken glass, and put a sponge over the incident forever.

In a week or so, arrangements being made for us to meet and be married in Montreal, he returned to the East. The Montreal idea had merits. As we had decided to live under British laws it was as well to be married under them. Mr. Saltus' former matrimonial knots had been tied in New York and Paris. He wanted to try a new place for luck. Owing to his divorce from Helen Read he could not be married in New York State in any event. Besides, he wanted to avoid a thing which loomed like a menacing monster in his path, — publicity. The newspapers had been none too lenient over his first offense. With the attempt to secure a divorce from his second wife, all the past had been resurrected and flung in his face in none too complimentary a way. His imagination visualized the headlines over a

third marriage. "Saltus Lures Third Victim to the Altar." "Bluebeard Put to Blush." "At the Close of a Misspent Life Saltus Takes Third Wife to Nurse Him in His Declining and Reclining Years."

Spring merged into summer. Letters from Mr. Saltus, then in New York, inquiring when we should meet in Montreal, suggested also that we should sail from there direct to England.

An incident occurring at this time was so vital and far-reaching in my estimation that an indefinite postponement of our marriage seemed the only solution. I wrote him to that effect, — wrote also that I contemplated a trip to China and the far East. This was not done on impulse or in anger, and knowing that I was not given to threats, and that my reasons were substantial, Mr. Saltus took it like a death-blow. Four days' journey apart, he was powerless to get to me before I could carry it into effect.

Telegrams stormed in. Though upsetting

in the extreme, they were unanswered. Self-preservation lifting its head again, suggested retreat. It was a mirage however. A preservation excluding him would have been momentary only, for wherever I might hide I knew he would find me if he spent his life in the search. The hand holding the fold of my frock held it still. His last telegram, so characteristic that it is given here, broke down my resistance: —

Miss Marie Giles,
The Woodward,
Los Angeles, California.

Am wiring fifth time. If you have any affection for Snipps don't let it be in vain. Try send some helpful message, only send it quick. If not Snipps goes under. This is the last despairful cry of love and grief eternal. God bless you little girl.

E.

That broke me up entirely. A wire that I would start for Montreal at a certain date, was followed by my arrival there. Mr. Saltus was

Form 2589 B.

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Miss Marie Giles,
The Woodward
Los Angeles, Calif.

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E. 334p.

Fac-simile of Telegram sent to Marie Saltus

at the station. He was still thin but looking better. With a foresight scarcely to be expected he had arranged everything for our accommodation at the Windsor Hotel, dog included, and an application had been sent to the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to take Toto into England. Over the details of our marriage however he had struck a snag. It was our desire to have the ceremony performed in the Roman Catholic Church, a form in which I had been educated. The ritual of the Church appealed very strongly to Mr. Saltus, as he believed it contained not only all the beauty and mysticism of the ancient mysteries but to his mind all the beauty and truth of Christianity as well. Owing to technicalities over his first marriage, and some uncertainty regarding baptism, this was found to be impossible. It was a severe disappointment to us both. A civil marriage was then decided upon. That, too, was out of the question. The Province of Quebec being under ecclesiastical law,

we appeared to have struck an impasse, and a trip to Toronto seemed inevitable.

It was the middle of August and the heat was frightful. I told Mr. Saltus to make any arrangements he pleased provided I did not have to run around myself.

The following day he came up to me in Dominion Square, where I was sitting for a breath of air, reading a detective story, with Toto lying at my feet.

"Come along,—we are going to get married," he said, "and we have only time to walk to the church comfortably."

Mr. Saltus was never behindhand when he had decided to go anywhere. When starting to catch a train one could be sure that an hour at least would be spent at the station, while he walked restlessly to and fro fuming at the slowness of the clock.

"Let me go to the hotel to change my frock, and get rid of this detective story," I said.

"Change nothing. Come along as you are. You can put on all the frills after you cremate

me,— if you have the courage to try it again."

He began pulling on my arm. It was nothing if not casual. After all, Toto was not concerned over our looks, and there was no one else but the clergyman, to whom we were complete strangers. Up Dorchester Street we sauntered. We were half an hour ahead of time as it was. Mr. Saltus fumbled in his pocket and brought out a ring. That was the most amusing and least expected part of it all. Time and again he had expressed himself on the subject of wedding rings with scorn. To him they appeared to be symbols of eternity between people for whom an eternity of misunderstanding was at that moment beginning. His views were my own. No symbol of servitude would, I had often remarked, weigh down a finger of mine. He handed it to me in silence, and in silence I looked at it, an unobtrusively thin band of gold with our initials, and the date and the word "Eternamente" inside. Smiling, I returned it and said nothing.

"It's going to hurt me cruelly if you won't wear it," he said at last. "I know I have made fun of such things, but this is my last wedding, and this is different. It means something more than I supposed a marriage could." He broke off and inquired, "By the way, what are you going to do with Babe when we get to the church?"

Toto was trotting along a few feet in front of us.

"Take her to the wedding, of course. She can sit between us."

"However lightly you may be taking this, it's a serious affair to me," he said, "and much as I love her I don't think it the thing to take a dog into a church."

"What isn't the thing for her isn't the thing for me, either," he was told. "You can have both of us, or neither. Speak up."

We walked on a bit, and then looking at each other we began to laugh.

"I'll put on your symbol of servitude and

Babe goes to our wedding,—what do you say?"

"Right-O," Mr. Saltus agreed with a laugh. "It's the usual thing,—a mother accepting life-long punishment for the sake of her child."

We were at the door of the church then. Dr. Scott, who was substituting that summer at the American Presbyterian Church, met us with his witnesses, and giving the dog even a more cordial welcome than ourselves, performed a brief ceremony. Only when it was over did we realize that the detective story was still in my hand. It is to be hoped that Dr. Scott believed it a prayer book.

Unexpected events rearranged our plans. We did not sail from Montreal, but six weeks later I went from New York, and Mr. Saltus joined me in London in January. Thereafter during the next two years Mr. Saltus crossed and recrossed the ocean as if it were a ferry, living in an apartment hotel when in New York and when in London wherever I happened to be stopping.

It was in the spring of 1914 when upon returning from a winter in Algeria and joining Mr. Saltus on the return route, I agreed to try the experiment of housekeeping. A maisonette in Nevile Street, Onslow Gardens, was the result of our search. For two such absent-minded and non-observing people, impatient of petty details, to attempt anything practical was braver than wise. English servants do not venture suggestions unasked. There were meals when I remembered to order them. Sometimes there was too much, and more often nothing at all. On these occasions it was convenient to live between the Brompton and Fulham Roads. I was always apologetic and distressed when we had to go out for a meal, but Mr. Saltus' remarks were invariably the same:—

"I hate practical women. Any fool can feed my body. I never expected you to develop into a housekeeper and I would hate you if you did. Smile and be yourself."

There are not many men who would say

that—on an empty stomach. A cook-housekeeper came to our rescue at last. Mr. Saltus was writing a series of articles for Harper's Bazaar at the time,—ultra-feminist articles. They were called "The Reflections of Floraline Schopenhauer." The writing of them amused and interested him very much. It was not creative work. It was a new figure on which to drape the ideas, witticisms and epigrams he had stored up in a note-book; and they were amazingly clever. In discussing them and women in general, I remembered his friend of the Los Angeles days and said:

"Did you never hear what became of that clever girl? It's queer that you lost all track of her."

"No," he said, "I believe she went to France to live."

The subject dropped there. With his obsessing fear of the possibility of unpleasantness, added to the memory that he had denied all knowledge of her when in San Diego, he would not, or could not, face the fact—simple

enough if he had not complicated it for himself—that the friendship had continued. He might have told me that he had seen her again in New York and coached her a bit in writing, where, with her clever pen and unusual ability, she had forged ahead into a position of great responsibility.

Having once more the comfortable background of a home, Mr. Saltus took up his studies in occultism, spending hours in the Theosophical Library in Tavistock Square poring over the "Pistis Sophia." That again opened up vistas and visions of a far-reaching character. From the Theosophical Headquarters it was but a step to the British Museum, and the holy of holies where rare books are loaned to responsible students within the enclosure. This spot was always the Mecca toward which Mr. Saltus gravitated.

Leaving our apartment about eleven o'clock each morning, he would take a 'bus to Piccadilly Circus, and walk the rest of the way to Museum Street. On the return trip he walked

all the way, trying to get in better physical trim through exercise.

Coming home one day he made the first allusion to the twinges in his legs which increased rapidly in both inconvenience and pain.

"I'm getting to be a good-for-nothing old scoundrel," he announced at dinner one night. "I, who used to walk from Los Angeles to Hollywood with ease, am in for something. I cannot understand what causes the pain and discomfort in my legs. I'm ready for the ash-can. You will never get a hat for me."

"Don't you believe it. If you have any fears concerning your value I will get up a sale and auction you off."

"I don't want to be auctioned off. Men are scarce in England and a fat woman might bid me in. Even if you want to get rid of me, Babe wants me."

"Neither you nor Babe need distress yourselves. Your absence will not be prolonged. The fat woman will drop you back on the

door-step as damaged goods and I can auction you off all over again. It will be an endless procedure."

Joking with me was a diversion that Mr. Saltus loved. We were always living with imaginary people concerning whom he would ask hypothetical questions. One was as follows: —

"What would you do if a fat woman came in with a bag in her hand, and tried to put me in it and take me away?"

"'Madame,' I would say, 'if you are trying to steal my little Snippsy, let me assure you, that though men may be scarce, hats are more so. A smart autumn model in exchange is my price.'"

At that Mr. Saltus would exclaim: —

"I would not go. I would scream and bite her, and she would be glad to let me drop."

"Not at all," I always replied, "for I would tell her that you have been expecting hydrophobia all these years and it has at last shown

itself. Then she would carry you off to the lethal chamber with all speed."

That remark always called forth a series of "Wows" in various keys. This story with variations was gone over and over, and as a rule was followed by one from me. Mr. Saltus was disappointed when it was not.

"What would you do," I asked, "if, upon going into your study you found a giant elemental sitting at your desk tampering with your copy?"

Woe to the typist who had the temerity to change even a comma in Mr. Saltus' work. It was enough to incite him to murder.

"I would go mad,—seize the elemental and my vibrations alone would tear him to atoms."

"But suppose he was an all-powerful elemental,—a black magician, and he said that he was going to edit everything you wrote in the future?"

"Then," Mr. Saltus always said, "I would rush to the window, open it and jump out into the fourth dimension in the akasha."

The episode of the elemental ended there till the next telling. So much of Mr. Saltus' life had been sad and unsatisfying that the desire to dip for a time into make-believe was soothing and diverting to him. It was a region in which we spent many an hour.

CHAPTER XIII

During his stay in London, a year before, Mr. Saltus had made the acquaintance of a friend of mine,—a very remarkable woman, Mrs. M——, a lady of foreign birth and high social position, married to a Britisher. Unique as a mother, untiring in the service of humanity, and possessing extraordinary supernormal powers, she gave him, firsthand and from personal investigation, information and understanding of so unusual a character, that Mr. Saltus regarded the privilege of knowing her as an unmerited blessing. She gave him also a curious old talisman—a tiny Rosicrucian cross that had once belonged to a world-renowned occultist. So frail and worn had it become by centuries of use, that twice it had been backed with gold to hold it together. It was the last earthly possession his hand relinquished in death.

Figuratively and literally, Mr. Saltus sat at Mrs. M———'s feet and absorbed what she gave him. Her influence on his life was more vital and far-reaching than that of any other human he ever met.

"Triple ass that I was," he said over and over again after he met her. "I sent out 'Lords of the Ghostland' when I knew nothing. Had I but waited till now I could have written a masterpiece. Instead of that I turned out a skeleton,—no meat, no truth, no insides."

This fretted him constantly.

"If I live long enough," he said, "I will undo 'The Philosophy of Disenchantment' and 'The Anatomy of Negation,' as well as 'Lords of the Ghostland,' and epitomize all I have digested into a single volume and call it 'The History of God.' Then I will sing my *Nunc dimittis,* go to Adyar and put my pen at the service of Mrs. Besant."

It was a far step for the man who had once written, "There is no help here or anywhere." Years of study, reinforced by the chastening

effect of thinking for another less practical and more highly strung than himself, had done much for him, but the increasing application of Theosophy to his daily life had done more. As far as he could, he made himself over—recognizing and combatting his weaknesses with heroic courage. Though the remnants of his fundamental fears remained and cropped up at unexpected times and places, they were modified to a remarkable degree. One could not anticipate them however, and occasionally they led to rather amusing results.

It was after a prolonged period of insomnia and a nervous break-down, superinduced by circumstances entirely unconnected with Mr. Saltus, and after I had been in bed for weeks, that one of these lapses occurred. He was an angel during this trying time, rushing up to Covent Garden daily to get me peaches (a luxury in England) and taking his meals on a tray at my bedside, after which he read aloud to me as long as I cared to have him do so. It was after a peaceful evening passed in this

way, that one of his fears reappeared for a moment, and in such a way that one with less understanding of his psychology would have been very angry.

Mr. Saltus' bedroom opened off my own, and it was our custom to leave the door ajar in case I should need something during the night. He was asleep and I was resting when a low "woof" came from the foot of my bed. Another "woof!" and then a growl followed. Toto was trained to be quiet and did not "woof" without cause. I sat up and listened. Light footsteps were audible from the drawing-room down stairs. I waited a moment or two to make sure, and then, speaking quite naturally but loudly enough to waken him, I said:—

"Get up, Snippsy. I think there are burglars down-stairs."

What followed was enough to frighten even the most hardened criminal. With a blood-curdling shriek, Mr. Saltus sprang from his bed, and slamming the door between our rooms locked it,—locking as well the other

door giving on to the hallway. So unexpected was it, and so sudden, that it took me a moment to realize that instead of going to the rescue, he was, as he afterward admitted, curled up in bed, with the covering pulled over his head.

Somebody had to do something. Getting out of the bed I had not left for weeks, with Toto leading the way, I turned on the drawing-room lights from a switch, and tottered down stairs. The intruder was quite harmless,—a man who occupied a tiny pied-à-terre on the ground floor. He had mislaid his matches, and being on a friendly footing with us had, as he thought, come up noiselessly to help himself from our smoking-stand.

When with shaking legs I managed to get up the stairs again, Mr. Saltus met me on the landing. He had gained control of his nerves and was coming down to look after me. It was my hand which locked the door between our rooms that time, after calling him a "spineless jellyfish," an epithet which he had heard many

times before and which always called forth the same reply:—

"Were our spines of the same rigidity we would have killed one another years ago."

None the less Mr. Saltus was none too keen for me to ask those of our friends who dropped in for tea, if they wanted to hear how he routed the burglar. How ever the telling of this affair sounds, it was not the result of fear in the accepted sense of the word. It was a condition of Mr. Saltus' nerves only.

A day or so later, a specialist having been called in to see me, he suggested that pernicious anæmia might be aggravating my illness, and that transfusion of blood might be necessary. Mr. Saltus bared his arm in an instant, insisting that no time be lost and that his blood and no other be taken. It was however found to be a wrong diagnosis. Brave he always was, when there was no sudden impact on his nervous system.

Mr. Saltus loved London, the city, the life and the people. He loved even the greyness of

it,—loved the British Museum and the parks, but most of his old friends had passed on. One interesting figure silhouetted against the background of England,—one whom Mr. Saltus had known until then only through correspondence,—was T. P. O'Connor, M.P. Having seen quite a bit of him, and most pleasurably, the previous winter in Algeria, our first outing after I was able to be about, was to have tea on the Terrace at the House of Commons with him.

"I've read everything you have written," he told Mr. Saltus with a handshake.

"That you have survived it is the more amazing," Mr. Saltus answered.

Tea and time were consumed and forgotten. They were at home with each other in a moment, and Mr. Saltus was enchanted by "Tay Pay's" wit and charm. They laughed and chatted like two boys in a tuck-shop.

It was upon returning from the House that afternoon that Mr. Saltus complained again of the pain in his legs.

"I walk less and less easily each day," he said. "What can be coming over me? Am I going to be paralyzed?"

A physician was consulted the following day, and a liniment prescribed, but the pain went on increasing. A few days after, and while Mr. Saltus was much depressed over his condition, we were invited to a dinner, which he accepted. Barring myself, the guests were all celebrities of various kinds,—playwrights, authors, actors, musicians and lecturers, with Mr. Saltus the visiting comet. It was not until the taxi was at the door to take us that he announced:—

"Mr. Me, won't go."

There were no extenuating circumstances to excuse him, nor did he attempt to find or fake them. Past experience had shown him how transparent they were to me.

"I'm not up to the mark. I'm incapable of being a rapid-firing battery of wit, wisdom and epigrams," he announced.

"You should have realized your limitations

sooner," I said, "for you cannot evade a dinner at the twelfth hour, when you are the guest of dishonour as well. We are already late. It's outrageous."

"Outrageous or not, I'm not going. You never do anything that is expected of you. Why should I? The less people see of me the better they will think of me. You must go and get me out of it as well as you can. Take a leaf out of my book and invent something."

That was too much.

"I won't have to invent, to tell them you are a lunatic resting from a lucid interval. No wonder there is no stampede for your work. You wrap yourself in impenetrability and expect the world to be clairvoyant. It won't do. I will be Balaam's ass no longer. You must bray for yourself."

His braying was the usual "Wow! Wow! Please extract poor Snippsy. He'll take Totesy Babe for a walk in Kensington Gardens every day and be such a good boy ever after. Why

do you care how I treat others? I'm always old dog Tray to you."

What could one do with such a man? He had to be taken "as is," the way they label goods on bargain counters, or not at all. I could have insisted, and taken him willing or not, for more than he disliked being dragged out against his will did he hate to have me seriously provoked with him. But what would have been the use? He would have gone had I insisted, but acquitted himself in such a way that his absence would have been preferable.

This was not the first time that such a thing had occurred.

When I was living in California he had refused to come to the dining-table in my own house, and gone to bed while the guests were arriving. Fate was against him, however, in that instance. I invented a fairy tale to cover his absence and all would have been well, but while the maid was passing coffee in the drawing-room Mr. Saltus remembered a bottle of gin in the pantry. No one answering his

ring, he slipped down the back stairway to secure it, and tripping, fell down the entire length, with such a thud that guests as well as servants were in doubt if a burglar or an earthquake was responsible. With one accord they rushed in the direction of the sound and discovered him in extreme negligée, to his even more extreme embarrassment. This was an episode he did not like referred to, but upon this second offense it was dragged out again in all its details!

"No white woman should have married you," I exploded, "and I have only myself to blame with two sad examples to warn me. Good-night."

It was no rare treat to appear at a dinner of celebrities after the guests were seated, minus the star who was my sole reason for being included, and take it as if I were lapping up cream. To be casual was no joke. I entered with the remark, that, being an assemblage of egos answering to the classification genius, they alone could appreciate the temperamental

spells of unknown origin afflicting the species—and be tolerant to a fellow in crime. To sit down and pretend to enjoy it topped the treat.

A fortnight later saw us at the Granville Hotel, Ramsgate, for the week end. As he had been there less frequently than myself, and knew fewer people, some one referred to Mr. Saltus as "Mrs. Saltus' husband." That amused him enormously.

"They have me in my proper place here," he exclaimed. "They know I am a subordinate entity."

A greater surprise was, however, awaiting him when a child on the sand called out:—

"Look,—there is Toto's Papa!"

That sent Mr. Saltus into a fit of laughter. He always enjoyed a joke on himself so much. The sea air which is supposed to induce sleep was our reason for going to Ramsgate, but even sea air handicapped by the noise of slamming doors and loud talking in the halls, seemed useless. I complained of this before

going to my room, and Mr. Saltus said that he would speak to the manager of the hotel and see what could be done about it.

The following morning, upon going out with the dog, I almost fell over Mr. Saltus. He had sat on a chair with his back against my door all night in order to urge those who passed to be quiet. That offset the incident of the burglar and the dinner with interest, yet he did not feel that he had done anything exceptional. He was himself,—that was all. The latent sweetness and unselfishness in his character developed along lines uniquely his own. He was an entity who could not be taken apart and analyzed. He had to be accepted as a whole or not at all. He had his weaknesses,—they were near the surface and but imperfectly concealed. He had also a nobility, a fineness and a greatness of soul I have never seen equalled by any human, at any time, anywhere.

A day or two later the world was shaken by the word WAR. Rumours of it had

been in the air for some time,—not a world war to be sure, but a civil one in Ireland. Leading Home Rule members of Parliament had been in nightly conference with the Prime Minister, and from what our friend "Tay Pay" had let drop, we anticipated anything but what eventuated. No one in unprepared England dreamed of war. The idea was too bizarre, too theatrical to be true. Everyone was talking about it, but no one really believed it possible, except perhaps those few who, having an extension of consciousness, could penetrate the veil of the seeming of things.

Mr. Saltus with myself was in a cinema, when, during an interval between pictures, there was flashed upon the screen the message, "Great Britain sends ultimatum to Germany." The audience, spell-bound at first and silent, let out an enthusiastic "Hurrah!" Mr. Saltus gripped me by the arm and whispered:—

"If this is true it means not only a world war but the breaking up of our home here, and my return to the States, for it may last for years,

and no one knows how the stock market may jump and whether ruin camps on the doorstep." (What little Mr. Saltus had was in stocks and bonds.)

British as he was in sympathy and inclination — wishing, as he had said many times, that karma would bring him back next life as an English country gentleman, — Mr. Saltus threw himself into the spirit of what followed, in a way that no one could have foreseen. Countermanding the orders given the maid never go to his room unless the house was on fire, he told her to bring the morning papers at whatever hour they were delivered, which was usually before seven, and thereafter during the day to take up all the extras she could secure. "Floraline Schopenhauer" was put aside, and a sonnet, "Caligula Germanicus," was the immediate result.

The summer advanced, and so did the march toward Paris. Then, in common with all Americans in England, he began to rage against the United States and its apparent

apathy. His inability to do anything was irksome. To stand on the balcony giving off of our drawing-room and watch the first raw recruits march past, made it difficult for him to restrain himself. With a Union Jack fastened to Toto's collar he would go out for his usual walk in Kensington Gardens, and come back raging at his uselessness. Backed by a wife proud of her British ancestry and growing more and more indignant each day at the United States Government, Mr. Saltus finally decided to become a naturalized British subject. Incidentally, this was what Henry James did a little later on. That he did not take out these papers (which, had it been done, would have saved me a series of unpleasant incidents) was owing to the fact that such small possessions as he had were in the United States, and that, writing for the magazines and newspapers published in New York, he was dependent on the good-will of the American public. It was taking a chance to swap countries during a

war. A blacklisting of his work was within the possibilities.

At the beginning of the war people were seen in restaurants and theatres a great deal. The slogan "Business as usual" meant the keeping alive of their morale. That phase of it passed Mr. Saltus unnoticed. Not half a dozen times during his life in London did he go out of an evening. They were all alike, prefaced by a short walk to give our dog some exercise, followed by an hour or two of studying the Quabala. Such a life would have been not only deadly to the normal woman, but would have sent her rushing to Reno. So seldom was Mr. Saltus asked by me to go anywhere, and so certain was he that if asked it would be worth while, that he never questioned where I was taking him. Like the little boy who when he was good was very good indeed and when he was bad was horrid, Mr. Saltus took the hurdle from one to the other at intervals. It was about seven to five, the balance, however, being in his favour.

Among his mental twists was a very pronounced one. Willing enough to entertain now and again provided the people were interesting, he was unalterably opposed to having anyone, no matter who, sleep under our roof for even a single night. Strangers irritated him, and friends if they remained too long did so as well. One incident shows how embarrassing it could become at times.

Among my friends was a beautiful and talented girl, Miss H———, who lived in the country, and for whom Mr. Saltus had expressed much admiration. She came up to London one afternoon. It was in the early days of the war, when hotels and boarding-houses were packed with Americans waiting to sail for home. In these circumstances she could find no place to stop; and, knowing we had a maisonette of some size, she called me on the telephone and asked if I could put her up for the night, suggesting very considerately that she would occupy the chesterfield in the drawing-room on the floor below our sleeping rooms.

Well acquainted with Mr. Saltus' peculiarities, I would have invented an excuse, but his admiration for her had been so often expressed that I believed she would prove the exception, so, deciding to chance it, I told her to come. Upon his return from a walk I told him what had occurred. The clouds gathered. Didn't I know that no one, princess or queen, would be welcome to stay over a night? His house was his castle. To everyone else he had to be Edgar Saltus, the author. With me only could he be Snippsy and take his comfort. Argument sent him into a rage. Told at last that she positively must come, he ran upstairs and packed his suitcases.

"If she comes I go to a hotel."

"That is impossible," I told him. "She would have gone to one herself if she could have secured a room anywhere. The poor girl only asks to sleep down stairs in the drawing-room."

"If I can't get a room I'll sleep on a park bench or the ground. It's summer and it won't

kill me. The men at the front have much worse."

There was no bluff about it.

"Call her up," he urged, "and tell her I am a lunatic whose worst mania is killing people in their sleep."

"It's likely that she would believe a tale that wagged like that, and she would hate you forever afterward."

"What the devil do I care?" he screamed. "Let her hate all she likes provided she stays away."

"Call her yourself," I said, "and tell her so. It's your funeral, not mine."

Straight to the telephone he went and did so, not in the language he had used to me. It was apologetic and diplomatic in the extreme, but it let her know very definitely that she could not come. She did not come, and she never darkened our door again; and there is very little doubt in my mind but that she regarded me as the culprit and Mr. Saltus as the scapegoat forced to do an unpardonable

act. She probably concluded upon thinking it over that I looked upon her as more dangerous than the woman with the sack she had heard us joke about, and that I was afraid she might carry him off more effectually.

I had let Mr. Saltus turn himself out of the house when we were in Los Angeles because a principle was involved and the life of a defenceless animal jeopardized. There was no question of that in this case, for humans speak or shriek their need; besides, Miss H—— was a very charming girl and had other acquaintances in London.

So Mr. Saltus slept in peace under his own roof and the chapter was closed.

CHAPTER XIV

On the heels of this episode was one of another character. Among Mr. Saltus' many charming qualities was an especially endearing one. With persons he loved, the passing of years seemed to leave no trace whatever, and he could see no difference in their personal appearance. In his eyes, until the hour of his death, I remained the fragile and impertinent child to whom he had stretched out his hand on the sands of Narragansett Pier,—a helpless and impractical creature in a world of scheming scoundrels.

In his eyes I had not a fault. It was not that he was in ignorance of my limitations and undesirable qualities; these he saw with clarity, but he believed that every virtue had its negative aspect as well,—the defects of its qualities, as he expressed it,—and to divert or eliminate these was to impair the desirable attributes

behind them. In consequence any shortcomings of mine were regarded as indications only of the most superlative virtues, and not to be tampered with. No woman could ask more of a man than to accept her limitations and incapacities as evidences of her extraordinary worth. This hallucination was a pleasing one, but it had its negative side as well. Nothing could convince Mr. Saltus that every male creature was not laying plans to entice me away from him. The fact that for long periods at a time I was not only ill, but looked too frail to attract anything more than sympathy, counted for nothing. The fact that the majority of men could not run fast enough from a woman possessing my defects was unconvincing to him. Over and over he was told that the qualities which attracted him would antagonize the average man from the start. He was still convinced that I was a fragile and unsuspecting child in a world of vultures and demons. It must be said, however, that Mr. Saltus was too much of a philosopher ever to ask me to

do or to omit anything. My freedom of action was limitless and his trust absolute, and he never questioned any of my actions except as a joke.

Among our acquaintances was a Turkish diplomat, T——— Bey. Occasionally, as is the custom in England, I had tea with him or he with us, and now and again I went with him for a walk in the Gardens. The fact that he looked enough like Mr. Saltus to be a twin brother had first called him to my attention. He was perhaps ten years younger, but they looked about of an age.

Besides the fat woman and the elemental, there was another joke we had rehearsed for years. It was as follows, and leads directly to the incident concerning T——— Bey.

"If you had not been such a black devil I would not have fancied you," I used to tell him.

"I'm not a black devil. I'm a good little slavey."

"No, — you're a little dark E" (making a pun

on his name), "and your complexion is your stock in trade."

"I thought it was my wheedling ways?"

"No, indeed! And if I ever disappear, look about for a man a shade or two darker than yourself and miaw around the neighborhood."

"Any man darker than I will have a touch of the tar brush."

"Perhaps you have a bit yourself. Remember, an ancestress of yours came from Port Royal, Jamaica. I have often suspected the worst."

This joking always amused him so much that when en route to Africa the year before I had written him saying that it was with delightful anticipations I neared the home of his ancestors. That letter brought the query, "Which, monkeys or blacks?" To which I replied that they would be "high monkey-monks of some kind."

Much as he enjoyed this chaffing with me, T——— Bey stuck somewhat in his throat when I joked about him. Accustomed to his

habit of non-interference—for, as he remarked, "Dogs can be trained, but cats have to have their own way in everything"—I was amazed when he said:—

"If you don't mind, and can see your way to it, I would rather you did not go alone to restaurants with T——— Bey."

"Of course not if you prefer," was my immediate reply. It was a trivial matter, too unimportant for discussion. An hour later, however, when going into the Ritz for tea with some friends from the country, I found T—— Bey was included. That was quite all right. What was not so was the fact, that while tea was being served an urgent telephone call made it necessary for my friends to leave at once. T——— Bey and I were left alone having our tea together. To get up and go, no matter what the excuse, would have been an insult. There was nothing to do but to remain and explain the circumstances afterward to Mr. Saltus. That explanation was never given or asked. As we were finishing our tea Mr. Saltus

walked into the room, saw us, and coming forward smiling with outstretched hand asked if he might join us. This he did, chatting all the time as delightfully as he could. Being asked by T——— Bey if he knew I was in the Ritz, he answered lightly, but with an underlying meaning:—

"My intuitions about Mrs. Saltus are uncanny. If she has as much as a headache I know it. If she is perplexed I feel it, and if she is vexed with me without giving a sign of it, her vibrations tear me to pieces and I cannot endure it."

On the way home I started to tell him how it had all come about, but he stopped me short.

"Leave explanations to strangers,—love understands. That you were there after what you said this morning, is in itself proof that it was accidental."

He would not listen to a word and the subject dropped then and there. It was perhaps because of his laxity in this respect that my regard for truth was adamant. It was in con-

sequence characteristic of Mr. Saltus to avoid any discussion with me in which I might be forced to ask:—

"Do you want to hear the unvarnished truth?"

"No—no, varnish it,—varnish it, if it will hurt, which truth is more than likely to do. I would rather hear pleasing lies, even if I cannot believe them."

That was Mr. Saltus in the raw. He could not face truth, if either to hear it or to tell it was likely to cause pain or unpleasantness. Running parallel to this peculiarity was another, oriental in its courtesy, unusual in its application,—his attitude of deference toward me. Asked by T. P. O'Connor to express his views on a subject he had not considered until that moment he said:—

"Have you asked Mrs. Saltus what she thinks?"

"No," said T. P., "I'm asking you. It's your angle and opinion I want."

"My opinion is a zero. I haven't considered

the subject at all. Ask Mrs. Saltus for hers. After this we will be sure to discuss it, and whatever I may say off hand, I am sure to accept her views in a week or two anyway. Ask her now, it will save time."

Not only was his attitude highly deferential but most embarrassing at times. Upon one occasion I was asked by a foreign diplomat how it felt to live with a genius. Before I could reply Mr. Saltus took us both off our feet by cutting in:—

"Don't ask the poor girl something she does not know, and cannot answer. If you want to know about living with a genius, ask me."

The diplomat's understanding of English was imperfect, and this was too much for him. He may be still trying to decipher the reply.

During the years Mr. Saltus had become an adept with animals. Through his affection for Toto he had absorbed their psychology. It was he now who rushed into the street to pick up a horse's feed-bag and restore it to its place. Seeing an injured cat near Museum Street, and

being unable to get any one to help him, he discarded an armful of books and, calling a taxi, carried the victim in his arms to the Cat Shelter at Camden Town.

With autumn came the query, What and where? The war had been gaining momentum. Obviously it was unwise to remain too long away from the base of supplies. Certain also it was that if we tore up our home, taking everything back to the States, it would mean remaining there. With one of us remaining in England a home might be resurrected. It was in consequence decided that Mr. Saltus should return to New York, and rejoin me after things looked a bit clearer. The pain in his legs increased so that he walked less and less each day, but when he saw how it worried me he pretended that he was getting better and had never been as well in his life. In his anxiety to spare me and his desire to avoid telling disagreeable things he made a frightful mistake. Had I known the truth, never would I have let him return alone.

Leaving England was always a tug at his heart-strings. He was reluctant to put an ocean between us and reluctant to turn his back on possible service. Little did either of us dream, however, that he was leaving his beloved British Museum for the last time. In Waterloo Station once more, the station in which he had said so many "good-byes," we said au revoir again.

Upon his return to New York Mr. Saltus took rooms near the Manhattan Club and began to write a few articles on the origin of the war. Since "The Monster," he had attempted nothing of a sustained or exhausting character. It was not long before his letters became filled with anxiety over the distance between us, and he began to write — jestingly, to be sure — of acute indigestion, which, gripping him suddenly and sharply, had dropped like a vulture out of the air. As he expressed it, "Karma has me, not by the heels, at last, but by the solar plexus first." Added to the distress in his legs, which he finally admitted, were

these attacks, so sharp and severe that after the slightest exertion he had to sit down faint from the pain. Had the war been over he was in no condition to take a journey. Miss G——— afterward told me that he had greatly minimized the seriousness of his condition in writing me of it. Still his hope of returning to England persisted. The letters which followed me to Scotland, Ireland and back to England again were full of it.

Barring the little apartment in Washington Heights where Miss S——— made him welcome, offering such assistance and comfort as she could, and Miss G———, who suggested physicians and did all she could for his benefit, he went nowhere and saw no one. Had I known of the kindness and assistance so freely given by Miss S———, it would have relieved my mind concerning him. Unfortunately it was only after his death that I was able to thank her for all this.

By 1916 Mr. Saltus realized his condition better, and reading between the lines of his

letters I offered to return. Passage was taken, but because of the unrestricted submarining the boat was at the last moment withdrawn. Owing to the censor, cables as well as letters were delayed. The worry of it all made Mr. Saltus go down hill rapidly. In connection with this an incident occurred which affected Mr. Saltus horribly, and through no fault of either his or mine. It is so touching, so indicative of his finest sweetness and most endearing qualities, that it is not out of place here.

During the summer of 1913 we had met a very interesting Hindu of exalted position. A mutual interest in occultism drew us together, and thereafter he became one of our play persons, Mr. Saltus teasing me with the remark:—

"When you elope with I——, it will give me an excuse for following you to India, and India is the Mecca of my dreams."

"If it comes to the worst and you can see it no other way, I will do my best to accommodate you," was the usual reply.

One can joke over a matter face to face, but

war and distance give it another complexion. In a letter of mine, solely to amuse him, I mentioned that I had been out for tea with I———, and ended with the remark, "So don't give up your hope of India."

It was Mr. Saltus' custom as well as my own to write in the upper left-hand corner of our letters, "via Mauretania," or via this or that fast boat, in order that our letters would go the speediest way. Owing to the censor they were delayed at best, and then arrived five or six at a time. After this letter with the joke concerning I———, I wrote again almost at once, with "via Mauretania" in the corner as usual. Repairs being necessary, this particular boat was withdrawn for a fortnight, and my letter stupidly held over till its next crossing. All of this neither of us knew. What Mr. Saltus did know was that ten days went by without a line from me: a thing so unprecedented that it bowled him over completely. During this time I went down to Brighton for a week, which delayed my next letter, and caused the

cables which came from him to be opened, delayed, and reopened, before reaching me, for resorts on the sea were under special scrutiny. Hearing nothing from his cables, Mr. Saltus sent others to two friends, neither of which were delivered, as the friends happened to be in France at the time. When these finally reached me in a bundle I was both horrified and overcome. Rushing to the cable office I sent the following: "No one but Snipps. Written constantly. At Brighton for the week-end. Eternamente. Mowgy." This I believed would set his mind at rest. Worse was to follow. After being held for some time the cable was not only returned to me, but it was discovered that I had omitted to register as a foreigner, and I was regarded with a certain amount of suspicion. Snipps, Mowgy, and Eternamente, were not English words, and I was required to explain them. It was a terrible mess. In the meantime a letter came from Mr. Saltus. So extraordinary is it, — so unlike the letter of the average male, — that its words are

burned into my heart. That letter alone lifted him beyond and above the majority of his sex. After telling of his anxiety and the absence of letters it reads as follows:—

". . . . Do not think I am scolding you—and don't let me worry you either. I am not physically ill. I have only had a shock, and that prevents me from working. A few days ago I wrote you that I supposed I had not heard because the ships were delayed by storm and fog. Well, I waited hopefully. The storm passed, the fogs lifted and the ships came in. No letter. That was the shock, and was horrible. I cabled to the Brunswick, cabled also to the American Express and to Miss F———, and received no reply. My eyes look dreadfully, all blurred and red. I am not ill, but I might just as well be. I don't know when I will have the courage to look in my letter box. You will never know how horrible it is to look in and find it empty. It is as though I had a crack over the head, and a blow in the stomach. But there, little kit-cat, provided you

are not hurt or ill no matter about me. Anyway, God willing and God grant it, I will get an answer to this. In cabling say only, "Well, and safe, Mowgy." Don't send it deferred rates, for every hour of waiting is agony. It ought to reach me on the second by noon. If it doesn't? Well, Mowgy, then in that case remember this. Always, whatever you do or omit, I shall love you just the same. Always whatever you do I will forgive it. You are my little world and will be until the end. And just this, my darling: try and write that you forgive me for anything I have done or said which I ought not to. Remember that you are my all and that you can always return to me without thought of censure on my part. My little girl—if I could only stop crying. E."

This incident upset me frightfully. It proved that Mr. Saltus must be in a critical condition mentally, to be imagining such wild and impossible things, and that he needed care. There was still no sign of the war coming to an end, and whether or not a home in England would

be advisable under the changed conditions was open to question, for we were suffering acutely, not only for food, but for light, heat and other necessities.

Risking the submarines and the unforeseen, I sailed for the States. Mr. Saltus met me at the dock. Lack of exercise had made him too stout by far, he looked puffy, and every few feet he had to stop, for between the pain in his legs and the flatulence he was in bad shape.

He took me to the Hotel Broztel in East 27th Street, not only because it was only around the corner from his rooms, but because he had ascertained that our dog would be welcome there.

Mr. Saltus' usual method of assuring Toto's reception was an amusing one. Going to the office of the hotel, wherever we happened to be, he would say to the room clerk:—

"I want to know if there is any objection to children?"

He was of course assured that there was none.

"But my child is not like other children," he would say. "She has a fancy for running about in the organism of a dog. That is all there is of dog about her,—the rest is far more human than yourself."

At that stage in the conversation the man at the desk would begin looking around to see if there was a keeper with him, and if help could be obtained quickly. When this uneasiness became apparent, I would stroll up with Toto, who, putting her paws on the desk, woofing and going through her paces, would so intrigue the room clerk that he would forget Mr. Saltus and decide that the crazy owners of such a clever creature could be accommodated.

In connection with hotels and Toto, Mr. Saltus had an original way of putting our names on the register. It savoured of sarcasm and a slap at me in the bargain, but he always insisted that it was neither, and insisted upon the following:—

Mrs. Edgar Saltus and Dog.....New York City
Edgar Saltus .....New York City

CHAPTER XV

It was during my stay at the Hotel Broztel that an incident occurred, small in itself, but so characteristic of Mr. Saltus that it is included in order to show his many-sidedness. As I have said before, Mr. Saltus and I when by ourselves never chatted in rational English. From the early days of our acquaintance, when for the first time he was brought in contact with pets, he adopted as his own, and never relinquished, the baby language in which I always addressed them, and it became ours. He not only delighted in using it, but the vocabulary increased after he took it over. This is easily accounted for when one realizes the muted days of his early life, so filled with dread and discord, when he was afraid to play like other children, afraid to say anything, and with no outlet in the way of pets, on which he could expend his natural playfulness and lavish his love.

In writing of our various conversations, the language which we invariably used when alone has been omitted, for the reason that it would be difficult to understand, and that the deciphering of it would confuse and delay the meaning. In my estimation it added to Mr. Saltus' charm and was a key to the simplicity of his real nature, but to the public it would appear trivial, if not absurd. One incident, however, is amusing.

Coming into my rooms one day, Mr. Saltus exclaimed:—

"What drivelling fools some men make of themselves! Here I have been for ten minutes at the Manhattan, trying to get you on the telephone. The wires were crossed, and I had to listen to drivel of the most nauseous kind between a man and a woman. He, anyway, should be shot. A woman may be forgiven for twaddle—but a man never."

"What did they say?" I asked.

"Oh—the man kept calling her honeybunch, cutikins, and lollypop. It was rot of

the worst kind. Then she replied, calling him sugar plum and tootsy wootsy and tiddley-winks. Lord, what fools some people make of themselves!"

He went out on some business after a while. Later in the day my telephone rang. It was Mr. Saltus on the wire. Here is the conversation which followed:—

"Miaw, Miaw, little Puss."

"Miaw."

"Little fur smoothed down and little taily waving in the air?" (I was always supposed to be a Persian kitten.)

"Miaw."

"Wants to lap up keemy and nibbst fish at the Prince George for your din-din?"

"Miaw!"

"Baby Totesikins love her Pasy and want din-din also? Lift her up to answer."

(Toto lifted in my arms to the telephone, long practice having made her adept.)

"Baby wants nice bickies?"

"Woof! Woof!"

"Loves, Pasy?"

"Woof." (Toto put down.)

"There, little Puffikins, Snippsy orders nice din for both. Says he good old dog Tray. Says he satisfactory scoundrel."

Laughter.

"What are you laughing at?"

"At drivel of the most nauseous kind between a man and a woman. He at least ought to be shot."

Laughter from the other end.

Never until that moment had Mr. Saltus realized what our conversation must sound like to an outsider and an uninitiate. It brought us both up with a jerk. Thereafter Mr. Saltus wrote "tolerance," and, underlining the word, added it to a list he had made.

During the time Mr. Saltus had been alone in New York, one of his greatest distractions and relaxations was taking his daughter Elsie, a débutante, for tea or for luncheon. Tall, graceful, oriental in colouring like himself, he not only admired her for her beauty but en-

joyed her new and refreshing angle on life. Chatting with her was both restful and stimulating to him. In one sense she was a complete stranger to him, having lived apart for so many years. In another, she was so close that everything concerning her, no matter how slight, was of profound importance. As he had no near relatives and saw nothing whatever of his many cousins, she represented the only tie of blood in the world.

The circumstances were unfortunate. Living with a sister of her mother's, who, obviously, could not be expected to welcome him with outstretched arms, she met her father as a rule in restaurants. That was formal and less conducive to intimacy than seeing a parent in moments of rest and relaxation. Accepting this as the inevitable result of things, Mr. Saltus looked forward to the time when in a home of her own he would feel free to visit his daughter early, often and informally, and reach the bedrock of her very charming self. This seemed about to be realized, when,

MRS. J. THEUS MUNDS
The Daughter of
EDGAR SALTUS
And Her Little Son

soon after her début, she became engaged to one of the finest, most dependable and altogether delightful of men, — J. Theus Munds, — and a date for the wedding was set.

Any idea of going to the wedding reception was beyond Mr. Saltus' wildest dreams. Added to his abhorrence of crowds and festivities he was too ill for such an affair. A look into the church was the most he was capable of. Had father and daughter understood one another better, what followed need never have happened. Invitations were sent to us — but for the church only. Cards to the reception were omitted. A whip lash across his face would have hurt Mr. Saltus less. It bowled him over. Nothing would have induced him to go in any event, but the knowledge that he, her father, was purposely omitted was a knife in the back. Appreciating why his presence would have been not only unwelcome but an embarrassment, he expected others to have understood that he would have looked upon the invitation as an act of courtesy only.

Vainly I tried to put it before him as I saw it, explaining and extenuating the omission. It failed to have the desired effect. Mr. Saltus took it that I, too, was turning against him. It was a hopeless muddle. Had his daughter been older at the time, and more experienced, and had she known him better, it could have been avoided so easily. Had she gone to him explaining the situation, he would not only have urged her to omit him but entered sympathetically into her viewpoint. The invitations were not sent out by her, and she could not, without directly offending her aunt, have given one over her head. Acting as many another has when in doubt, she did nothing and was silent, believing that in the years to come it would be explained and made right between them. Mr. Saltus never overlooked it. Not until he lay in his coffin and that closed forever, did she come under the same roof with him again.

The following winter Mr. Saltus just escaped pneumonia, and was weakened by its effects, so

we decided to try housekeeping again. It was a brave venture. He wanted his meals when he wanted them. A set time for anything irritated him beyond endurance. Handicapped by a wife who frequently forgot that the ordering depended upon herself, and who was lost in abstract space when she should have found her way to the grocers or even to the telephone in time, it was beginning under difficulties.

Having a fancy for the atmosphere of Columbia University, which was his Alma Mater, we took an apartment in The Arizona, 508 West 114th Street, directly opposite the oval. It savoured of the country out there, adding the convenience of being between Riverside Drive and Morningside Park, where, his increasing lameness permitting, Mr. Saltus was able to go and rest. With the realization of his age and infirmities his desire to get away from the world increased by leaps and bounds, for not only did he wish to avoid people, but he even disliked to have them know where he lived. Long accustomed to being taken for my

father, that did not trouble him. But walking painfully with a stick, and stopping at intervals to take peppermint for the acute indigestion, which attacked him when in motion, humiliated him intensely. The sympathy in the faces of those who passed him, a sympathy sometimes expressed in words, was more agonizing even than the pain. In order to keep his home a secret retreat, where, like a wounded animal, he could hide in silence, he continued giving the Manhattan Club as his address.

While formerly Mr. Saltus had enjoyed having me take a walk with him, he now avoided it. Toto only was permitted to accompany him.

"My God," he would exclaim when questioned, "I may be a cripple, but I am not blind. I can see what people are thinking—'That poor girl tied to an old derelict!' "

Ridiculous as this was, Mr. Saltus could not be persuaded out of it. For the same reason he refused to get into a street car with me.

To sit, and let me stand beside him, as might happen if the car were crowded, was a chance he did not mean to take.

Specialists diagnosed his trouble as Reynous disease, an affliction most unusual in this part of the world,—of slow growth, but leading inevitably to a wheeled chair. The prospect appalled him. My father had been confined to one for many years, and Mr. Saltus knew what it meant.

"Karma has taken my legs from under me," he exclaimed again and again.

I invented cases of cure for him, but in my absence one day he consulted a physician, who had not been coached in the matter, and he told him the truth. The blow was terrific. Realizing that he must keep his mind occupied or go under, he started to write "The Paliser Case." The plot was not new. It was "The Perfume of Eros" in a new frock. He was not writing so much to create as to fight the constant pain in his legs. His condition was an embarrassing one to his pride. When the pain

attacked him, he had to sit down there and then, or fall down. To be compelled to rest on copings, doorsteps or curbstones, as the case might be, was tragic, and yet it was more tragic to remain a prisoner in the house. My mother gave him a small camp chair, and this upon occasions he took with him in case of emergencies.

One specialist after another was called, for between the indigestion and his legs, he was in perpetual torture. Rebellious at first, at what seemed a tragic and trivial end to his eventful life, Mr. Saltus brought his philosophy into concrete use, realizing that the lesson of patience was what he needed most, and was now in a position to acquire. With the acceptance of his afflictions as karma, and adjusting his mind to the idea of the wheeled chair, it lost its power to hurt him. Removing from my bureau a card I had stuck in the glass, he put it in his. It was a quotation from the Gitâ, which read:—"Taking as equal pleasure and pain, gain or loss, victory or defeat, thou shalt

not incur sin." From that hour he complained no longer, although complications and sorrow piled on in rapid succession.

Before telling of them, another incident should be given in its proper sequence. In giving some of Mr. Saltus' clothes to a tailor for pressing, a letter fell out of one of the pockets. It was a note from his Los Angeles friend Miss S———, of whom he had told me that he had lost all trace. Sent from abroad, it was directed to the Manhattan Club. It was not the simple note or the friendship which angered me at the moment, but his stupid and needless denials regarding it. Although I knew, better than anyone else could have done, how impossible it was for him to face momentary unpleasantness, this was too much. I went to him and said,

"Well, Snipps, you are a clever prevaricator, but in this you have been a plain ass. A spineless jellyfish must give place to it. Judas and Ananias combined could take lessons from you with profit. Here you are ready to cross the

river Styx and take the remnants of a misspent life into Avitchi." (The lower astral plane. Its lessons and condition were a subject which tormented Mr. Saltus more than a little. Darkness always appalled him, and he dreaded detention there.)

It was a cruel thrust on my part, said on the impulse of the moment. Mr. Saltus went white to the lips.

"That you can say such a thing over nothing!" he gasped. "I could not risk the reminders of Dorothy S————, which you would have treated me to had I told you."

His usual comeback about the "subordinate entity" and the "submerged It," failed him then. The lower astral plane with all its horrors, then uppermost in his mind, was recalled by my chance remark. He went off into hysterics, of so serious a nature that it ended by his going to bed. Complicating his other disabilities was heart trouble, and he was taking nitroglycerine at the time. There was

nothing to do but put a sponge over the incident and make light of it.

This I did, so convincingly that a few days later he began to call:—

"Little Anny feels ill," or "Little Anny wants to come in and sit down beside you,"—"Anny" being his abbreviation for Ananias.

It is a pity that Mr. Saltus was never frank with me over this friendship. Knowing my faults and limitations as no one else could, he knew also that smallness was not one of them, and that bigness and fineness on his part always engendered in me the desire to meet it in kind.

Had he but told me how greatly Miss S—— had ministered to his comfort during my absence in England, when he was ill and alone, —how she had overseen his mending, and, studying the needs of a dyspeptic, had prepared meals for him in her little apartment many a time, I would have been sympathetic.

Miss S—— came into Mr. Saltus' life shortly after his illness in Los Angeles, to which I have

referred, and at the moment when he was turning from the material to the spiritual. The understanding of occultism, which came to him in a blinding flash, was such that he could think and talk of little else. Miss S——, whose unusual personality and fluid mind rendered her susceptible to new impacts, was very much interested in what he told her along these lines. As she has put it to me since Mr. Saltus' death, "He came into my life like a Buddha, bringing enlightenment."

With thirty-five years' difference in their ages, and meeting him only when he was past middle life, she saw in him a great teacher — and he saw in her a rarely sensitive soul full of possibilities.

These potentialities were developed after Miss S—— went to New York, and soon placed her in a position of importance and responsibility.

She could not see in Mr. Saltus, as I did, a being who step by step had mounted a ladder of light on the rungs of his dead selves.

She saw only the finished product, for the process of refinement, by which his greater qualities had been separated from the lesser, covered a long period of years.

Some of those who read this biography will say that Mr. Saltus may have been glad to escape at times from a home where animals were given so much attention. This remark has in fact been made to me by those who can judge only from the surface of things. The fabric of this criticism is, however, less substantial than moonlight. During the latter years of Mr. Saltus' life much of Miss S——'s time was spent abroad. When Mr. Saltus saw her, as he did frequently during her intermissions in New York, he but left his home environment to go into a similar one. High-strung, nervous and temperamental, Miss S—— had the animal complex as strongly as I. Her apartment was never without one or two pets whose comfort, well being and happiness were her constant pre-occupation. Had he found these conditions under his own roof un-

pleasant, he would not have gone out of his way to duplicate them elsewhere.

Not long after Mr. Saltus' death, Miss S—— and myself visited the Bide-a-Wee Home for Animals, of which I was a director. On our return home we noticed a poor lost cat trying to cross the street through densely congested traffic. With one accord we stood still, holding our breath, our hands clenched in agony, till the cat reached the further side in safety. Our reactions were not only immediate, but identical.

I make no attempt to go into the whys and wherefores of it all, nor do I offer an explanation. The facts are as I have stated. An elucidation of them is work for a psychiatrist.

CHAPTER XVI

Toward the end of 1918, and after a short and unexpected illness, our Toto, who had walked beside us for over ten years, passed over. To write of it even now is acute pain. The loss was like that of an only and uniquely beloved child. We were stunned, and in spite of my philosophy I went to pieces as I had never done in my life. It was over this heart-breaking event that Mr. Saltus displayed his extraordinary qualities.

"I wish you would have little Totesy's body cremated and her ashes kept and mingled with mine," he said.

Astonishment brought the reply,

"I never realized that you loved her so deeply."

"Nor did I until now, but it is not only that. Husbands may come and go, but there can

never be but one Toto," he said. "With whom do you wish to be buried?"

I was silent.

"There, you have answered me," he said after a pause. "I am sure you are planning to be buried in the Dogs' Cemetery in Hartsdale. Do as I ask. Let Toto's ashes and mine be mingled,—then, no matter where you go or what you do in the future, yours too will rest with mine at the last."

His wishes were carried out, and the ashes of the little being we loved so deeply are mixed with his own. Under a modest headstone on which is engraved his name and the word "Eternamente," but a few feet from the monument covering the remains of his brother Frank, their ashes rest waiting to include my own.

This death cast a profound sadness over us. From comparative health, I went into a state of collapse and prolapsis such as I had never suffered before. Too ill and too indifferent even to speak, unless absolutely necessary, our

apartment became a place of silence. It was the most awful winter of our lives, but to his credit it must be said that Mr. Saltus not only never uttered a complaint but pretended all the time that his legs were rapidly getting better.

An unfortunate lease chained us to the depressing surroundings. It scourged Mr. Saltus' very soul to see me in such a condition and be powerless to help, for all he ever asked of me was to smile. When I could not do that, his world became night. He would sit beside my bed, the foot of which was elevated to an uncomfortable degree, and chat at length and delightfully on the interesting mysteries of antiquity in his effort to divert my mind.

It was then he started on "The Imperial Orgy." Taking some articles he had written for Munsey's Magazine years before as a base, he undertook, with the aid of some up-to-date books and notes he had gathered together during the years, to make a volume. Writing was not as easy as it had once been. It required an effort he had never before experienced.

Added to this, he took on a new job. For a man of letters it was an extraordinary thing. Unacquainted with any detail of housekeeping, hating the petty, uninteresting trifles necessary to it, it was a far step for him to undertake ordering the meals and going to market. Upon occasions when for one cause or another the maid failed to appear of a morning, he even made my tea and toast and brought them to my bed-side.

All the time he pretended to have a fancy for this. The shops on Amsterdam Avenue in the immediate vicinity of our apartment got to know him well. Now and again he would come in and say:—

"I went into a shop around the corner and a young lady jumped into my arms, licked my nose and tickled my ear with her tail. Don't tell me I am not a winner with the women."

I had to smile at that. The "young lady" was an Angora cat who embellished a shop in the neighborhood. To the amusement of her owner and the customers, she would jump on

Mr. Saltus' shoulders as soon as he appeared, and, wrapping herself about his neck like a scarf, would purr loudly. That cat pleased him enormously, and he was never tired of telling me about her. It was her purr which made him a constant patron of the shop.

Mr. Saltus had a profound interest in the enigmas of the past, and knowing I was keen also, he would sit on the foot of my bed and chat for hours concerning the Gates of Babylon, the astrological orientation of the Pyramids, Tyre, Carthage and the Incas. He was at his best during these times,—profound, epigrammatic and cynical by turns. The pity of it is that he had no audience but myself. He could have held any assemblage spellbound for any length of time.

It was at this sad time, and during my breakdown which followed, that Mr. Saltus gave fullest expression to the understanding, sympathetic and tender side of his nature. These qualities he always possessed in a superlative degree, and they were the leaven which made

him unique among men. So certain was I always of his attitude toward me, that it was my habit to run to him with a cut finger or an obsolete word. Whatever the case, my needs were answered immediately.

When I turned to him as usual, but with a breaking heart, he comforted me as he alone could. Night after night, when sleep dissolved into a mirage, he sat by my bed and read aloud to me. Algernon Blackwood was a great favorite with both of us. Some novel of his was always on Mr. Saltus' desk. I could not count the times he read the short stories in "Dr. Silence" aloud to me, and after reading discussed the various themes on which they were constructed. Talbot Mundy is another for whom Mr. Saltus had a great admiration, and his books were substituted when we began to know "Dr. Silence" by heart. He never asked me if I would like to have him read to me, or what particular books I fancied. He always knew, and brought the volume suited to my mood of the moment. Swinburne sang and

scintillated through him many and many an evening, and no one could give the lights and shades, the flow and flavour of his verse, as Mr. Saltus did. He adored Swinburne. At other times Keats' "Nightingale" trilled in the twilight.

This was when I could be read to and diverted, but there were times when I was too ill and miserable to listen. Then Mr. Saltus would take me on his lap and rock me as one would a child, singing little songs he made up as he rocked. He had done this often during the years, but never with such tenderness as at this time.

A friend of mine to whom I gave a rough draft of this biography to read, said:

"Did you never do anything but quarrel with Mr. Saltus?"

That remark surprised me into reading it over in a new light. Then I saw what she meant. So much of our life together was quiet, uneventful and peaceful, that to bring out Mr. Saltus' many-sidedness, I have given prom-

inence to incidents of various kinds—exceptional happenings, rather than our everyday life. As a matter of fact our life together was exceptionally harmonious.

It has been said by my critics, and with a great deal of truth, that I am the last woman on earth Mr. Saltus should have married. No one appreciates this fact better than I do—and this in spite of our similar tastes and temperament. A genius should never marry. There is that in his nature which not only unfits him for the limitations of conventional existence, but diverts and distracts his imaginative faculty and creative ability. If a genius marries at all, it should be to find not only a pillow for his moods, eccentricities and weariness, but a being who, merging her personality in his, supplements, and that unconsciously, such qualities as he may need in his work. The wife of a genius should lead his life alone—be able to anticipate his needs and supply them, so unobtrusively that he accepts her services without knowing it.

Although anxious to do this, I could not. It was temperamentally impossible, however much I tried to bring it about. Many factors were at the base of this inability,—my frailty as a child and the continuous care given to me in consequence; added to this was the disparity in our ages, which tinged Mr. Saltus' attitude toward me with that of a father. His former unhappy marriages had left their mark, and made him desire to be father, mother, husband and protector to me.

Coming into my life at the age and in the way he did, he was Edgar Saltus the man, never the author, to me, his work being lost in his personality. This was what he wanted, and, as he frequently expressed it:—

"To the world I am Edgar Saltus the author, but thank God, I can be merely Mr. Me to you."

Times without number I tried to make myself over into the kind of wife a literary man should have, but with the same results. How-

ever much I tried to conceal these efforts, Mr. Saltus would see them and say: —

"Do stop trying to be somebody else, and be my little girl again. You think you know the kind of a woman I should have married. Perhaps you do, but I would have killed her ages and ages ago. Do be yourself. I wouldn't have you changed by a hair."

However much he was deluded, it was by himself, for I always told him that I was the last woman in the world he should have selected.

CHAPTER XVII

During this winter the distress in Mr. Saltus' legs increased to such a degree that it took him ten minutes to walk from the Arizona to the corner of Amsterdam Avenue, a distance of only a few yards. Most of the time he went in a taxi, but even getting out of one and walking the length of the hall to the elevator, was so tiresome and so painful that he had to sit in the lobby for fifteen minutes or more before coming upstairs.

Speaking of elevators, brings back Mr. Saltus' chronic objection to meeting people. It had increased with the years so as to become almost an obsession. He would wait any length of time in the lobby of the Arizona, rather than get in an elevator if there was anyone else in it. He was afraid someone might speak to him. When I had visitors (which, owing to my illness and his aversion, was infre-

quent) he would shoot past the living-room and down the hall to his study, forcing his tortured legs to such activity that it often took him hours to recover from the effects of it.

A year passed after the death of our beloved Toto,—a year so like inferno, that even to think of it makes me shudder. With Mr. Saltus' helplessness it was a toss-up which of us was in the worse condition. I looked up one day to find him weeping. When questioned he said:—

"I wish we could die together, before you lose your reason entirely. While I live I can take care of you no matter what happens, but after———? It's killing me to watch you open bureau drawers and stand there striving to think why you opened them: to see you grasp the top of your head trying to remember. All these years you have surmounted everything. Now only, you cannot make the grade, poor child. Death should be meaningless to one who understands it as you do. Cannot you make your philosophy concrete?"

It was hard, but it made me take notice. A strait-jacket and a padded cell sprang into the perspective with his words, and the selfishness of sorrow stared me in the face. For the first time I realized what, in my indifference to everything, I had become, and it stunned me. While this was sinking in he spoke again: —

"I will be with little Toto so soon, and we will wait together until you come over. You know as well as I do that your tears are vitriol on her spirit, retarding her evolution. For God's sake never agonize over me, unless you want to keep me earthbound and in prison."

Not one man in a million would have lived under the conditions he accepted in silence for over a year. The average good husband would have left and asked for a divorce. Mr. Saltus not only never complained, but was concerned only for me. From that hour I decided to pull myself together.

By the time "The Imperial Orgy" was finished, Mr. Saltus was in such bad shape that it

was hazardous for him to leave the house alone. Twice he dropped in the street with heart attacks. The "flu" epidemic coming on, his infection-complex swam into evidence again. He ceased going in public conveyances, and took a taxi whenever he thought it necessary to go out. A handkerchief saturated with camphor held to his nose, he took the chance now and again. Although he carried a card with his name and address in his pocket, it was always with dread that I saw him leave the apartment. A flask of whisky was in another pocket, a bottle of peppermint and tablets of nitroglycerin were in a third, and yet he was really in no shape to go at all.

It was after a sudden heart attack in the street, that I decided he must remain indoors till physicians could tell more definitely about his condition. The "flu" epidemic offered the chance I had been looking for. Had I come into the open and told him I was fearful he might be brought home in an ambulance, he would have died there and then at my feet.

The impossibility of telling him anything unpleasant was a handicap. I was obliged to keep up the pleasing fiction that he was getting better every day, and to say that the increasing lameness and pain were but results of the treatment he was undergoing to effect a permanent cure. Any over-anxiety on my part would have been disastrous. Knowing his reactions, I said quite casually one day:—

"You must have to wait longer to pick up taxis these days."

"Why?" he asked in surprise.

"Because in default of enough ambulances, they are in such demand taking patients to the hospitals."

The implication was successful—Jean, the tree and the bubonic plague became as trifles compared to an infectious taxi.

"Great Heavens! I never thought of that," he exclaimed. "Are you sure?"

"I know only what I read and hear, but it may not be true," I said.

That was enough. It was weeks and weeks

before Mr. Saltus could be persuaded to leave the apartment. Meanwhile, the plot of "The Ghost Girl" was occupying his mind. Though the central situation was one he had used before, in a short story called "A Bouquet of Illusions," he hoped to justify his use of it again by his amplification of it.

When the plot was mapped out, he announced that he was ready to start work, and "the kennel" could be cleaned up. "The kennel" referred to his study, which I have described elsewhere, and which at that time resembled a cross between a junk-shop and an ash-heap. It was cleaned only between novels, the débris of one being removed to make a place for another.

During this time Mr. Saltus was undergoing treatments of various kinds with no apparent improvement. Day after day we went from one specialist to another, seeking and hoping. It was tragic, and he was very brave about it, smiling and joking about his condition, worrying because it worried me.

When the weather was inviting we would walk the short block to Morningside Park and sit there an entire afternoon, enjoying the green. Trees interested Mr. Saltus,—old trees especially. When we sat down our seat became the magic carpet, and we alighted among the druids in an enchanted wood. We followed their festivals, picked out their occult symbols and searched for the mistletoe. We found ourselves surrounded by the spirits of the trees, and became a part of an evolution other than human. Nature spirits, gnomes and fairies peeped in and out of the shrubs, as Mr. Saltus' imagination soared on delightfully. There was no pain in this world,—no mundane muddle to mess it up. Living more or less in a subjective universe, our rambles in thought were better tonics than medicine to him. Pan lived again, while nymphs and satyrs chased through the brush at our feet.

Day after day we sat there on the same seat and in a dream world, till the sun beginning to sink, and the chill in the air which followed,

recalled Mr. Saltus to aching legs and a man-made world.

Realizing as I did then that his condition was critical, it seemed the moment to effect a reconciliation with his daughter. The long hours he had to spend shut in an apartment would have been brightened by her presence. During this time we had written one another at intervals, and she knew that I would do my best to bring it about. Photographs of her in various places in our rooms, although not referred to by Mr. Saltus, helped to keep her in mind. One day, while we were on the subject of parents and children, I thought the psychological moment had arrived, and, reversing the role a step-mother is supposed to take, I led up to the subject, suggesting that I ask Mrs. Munds and her husband up to see him. Ill as he was, Mr. Saltus flamed.

"Thou too, Brutus!" he exclaimed. "You, too, are going to fail me at last? That I have lived to this!"

It was the one subject on which he could

not talk rationally. From his reaction I could see how much he loved her, for only a great affection can be hurt so deeply.

"If you want to kill me, send for her. I will know then that my case is hopeless, and between you it most certainly will be."

It was futile to persist. I could not make him see that she had not put him out of her life deliberately. That was his view of it. Having been put out, he refused to go back. In his condition arguments reacted badly upon his heart.

There was a time when the papers meant much to Mr. Saltus. For an hour, at least, every morning he would absorb them with his coffee and rolls. They meant not only material for articles, but links with the world from which he was shut off. With his increasing disability his interest in the papers waned, and he would scan the headlines only and read a few book reviews. There was one reviewer who especially interested him. Frequently of a Sunday morning he would call out: —

"Anything worth while in the paper to-day?"

This meant one thing. If there was a book review or an article by Benjamin de Cassères it was worth while, and that part of the paper was taken in to him. If not, it could wait until he had an idle moment during the day. Mr. Saltus admired de Cassères' work very much. He used to chuckle over it, and say:—

"That man was born a hundred years too soon."

The pity was that, admiring each other as they did, they never met. The hermit habit had so encroached with the years, that it had become impossible for Mr. Saltus even to think of meeting people in the flesh, however much he admired them in the spirit. His world becoming subjective more and more each day as he internalized, objective existence became shadowy and unsatisfying. With entire unselfishness he concerned himself more and more for me, always a frail and fragile being in his eyes, one possessing little physical

strength to fight her way alone in a sordid and selfish world. The fear of it haunted him.

"I'm a pretty ill man, am I not, Mowgy?" he asked me one day. "It will not kill me to die, but I should be prepared."

"Indisposed for the moment," I told him. "Now that you can eat and grow young again, I may have to take out an insurance at Lloyd's against someone stealing you."

This remark, no matter how often I made it, pleased him. He hated the idea of being old in my eyes, almost as much as hearing disagreeable things. The pleasing lies he loved were tonics, and I had to be very diplomatic with him.

"Yes, I am on the mend a bit,—but you never know."

Subconsciously he knew that he could not live long at best, but objectively he was always talking of getting better and planning for the future. On this occasion, however, he kept repeating "You never know" several times, following it with the remark:—

"I've been an incident to you,—a big one, but only an incident after all."

It was not like him to repeat himself, and I asked what he meant by it. What follows I have put in and taken out of this biography several times. There is too much concerning myself in it to be of interest to the public, and yet the unusual nature and quality of Mr. Saltus' mind are nowhere more forcefully exemplified.

"You might be my child. You may marry again some day?" he said.

"I might be struck by a comet or tumble on the third rail, with more probability. Jamais! Having broken you in has taken me to the door of the asylum. No more experiments. My arm is tired from wielding a cat-o'-nine-tails."

"Quite so, but all literary men are not 'litterers,' and all men are not literary. You might select more wisely next time."

"Disabuse your mind of that," I told him. "Such small wisdom as I have acquired has been

paid for too dearly. Besides, there is only one Snipps, and no one else would understand me."

"That's it," he said. "I was awake half of last night thinking about it. It's an awful thing to leave a helpless little girl all alone in a world of demons and vultures. The possibility haunts me."

"Then take your medicine like a good boy and stay here to look after me," he was told. "If it comes to a wheeled chair, I will wheel it, and we will go to California and live under blue skies and rose bushes, or to India, and sit at Mrs. Besant's feet."

This comforted him. Although he spoke constantly of dying, and quite as a matter of course, it was to be contradicted. He knew it was possible, but never did he admit that it was probable. The next day opened with a surprise. On my breakfast tray was the following, carefully written in Mr. Saltus' best copperplate hand:—

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR MY SUCCESSOR.

Read, mark, learn and inwardly reject.

1. — Thou shalt have no other God before or behind Mowgy. She will be supreme or nothing. Safety first.
2. — Few people will ever understand Mowgy. You will get the key quickly or never. If you haven't it, — run.
3. — Mowgy must have her own way entirely and in all things. It makes her ill to be contended with. Besides, her way is usually the best in the end. Save trouble and take it first.
4. — Mowgy can never be questioned. The slightest interrogation irritates her beyond expression. Let her alone. She is too frank for comfort. She will tell you everything sooner or later, and you will wish she hadn't.
5. — Mowgy never remembers anything you ask her to do, unless it is vital or concerns animals. Don't expect it. On the plane

where she lives, trifles do not exist. She forgets her own requirements. How can she remember yours?

6.—Mowgy is no housekeeper. Her intentions, not the results, are excellent. If she remembers to order meals be thankful. If she doesn't, be thankful that she is as she is. Keep accounts at the nearest restaurants and shut up.

7.—Mowgy is truthful. Don't ask her a question unless you want the unvarnished truth. It is better to take it varnished.

8.—Mowgy never picks up anything. Absent-mindedness only. Look carefully under chairs and tables before leaving a place. Gold bags, money, jewelry or important papers may be on the floor. She will drop you if you are not on the alert to avoid it.

9.—Mowgy does not live on this plane. Understand that clearly. She cannot be made to conform to the image and like-

ness of others. Don't try. You would not like her if you could make her over. Let well enough alone.

10.—The foregoing are Mowgy's limitations from the normal viewpoint. You must be abnormal or this will not apply to you. If she takes you it will be to make you over. The process is crucifying but curative. You will wonder how you ever managed to live without her. She has a world of her own, and it is the best world I know of to live in. If you have a chance to get there, make a fight for it. She is the only one of her kind on earth.

My blessing, E. S.

Such a document! Though written in jest, there was an undercurrent of seriousness about it. One could not read it unmoved. From that paper alone a psychologist could rebuild Edgar Saltus as he was. To me it is the most characteristic bit of writing he left behind him.

CHAPTER XVIII

The manuscript of "The Ghost Girl" finished, one might have supposed Mr. Saltus would take a rest, particularly as his heart became worse so rapidly that nitroglycerin was necessary most of the time. Carl Van Vechten had written of him so charmingly in The Merry-Go-Round, and with so much insight, that Mr. Saltus was encouraged to keep on working, as it was the only way in which he could lose himself for the time.

Sending the manuscript of "The Ghost Girl" to a typist at Columbia, he suffered another periodical cleaning of his "kennel" and started in on the outline of another novel. That also was an enlarged and amplified rendering of an earlier book, torn to pieces and baked en casserole with an occult sauce, to its enormous and entire benefit. He was not reminded of the fact that the central situation had been

used before. He was borrowing from himself, to be sure, and it was quite permissible, but in other circumstances I would have urged him to let his original creation stand. As it was I was glad to see him begin it as soon as "The Ghost Girl" was off his hands, realizing that he must have mental food and constant distraction.

The lease on our apartment bothered Mr. Saltus. During the years "things" had become relative to both of us. They had not only lost all value but they had become transformed into fetters. To get rid of the encumbrance of "things," and be free to pack a suitcase and go at will, was an intriguing idea to him. In discussing it, and the process of elimination necessary to reach the desired results, we agreed to get rid of all but two articles,—the carved olive-wood table at which he had written most of his books, and the arm-chair in which our little Toto had died. Mr. Saltus did not live to see it, but "things"—all the things we wanted to get rid of and forget,—are scat-

MARIE SALTUS

Sitting at the Table on which her Husband wrote his Books, burning Incense before a Siamese Buddha, and meditating on a Stanza from the Bhagavad Gita

[From a Painting by Hope Bryson, 1925.

tered now to the winds in every direction,—all but the table and the chair.

That chair, were it endowed with speech, could tell volumes. The same insight which expressed itself throughout so understandingly in regard to my devotion to Toto did so again, and in so touching a way, that it is the most vivid and enduring memory I have of Mr. Saltus.

The attacks of heart irregularity increasing, it became necessary for me to feel his pulse at intervals and give him the tablets of nitroglycerin. As soon as he felt one coming on he struggled through the hall into my room, to sink into that arm-chair and put his hand out.

"Quick,—quick,—M o w g y. F e e l my pulse," he said, many and many a time. "I think I'm sinking. Shall I take my medsy?" as he always called his medicine.

It was a serious responsibility for a novice. Night or day, whenever he felt an attack coming on, he went over the same route, and sank into the same chair. It seemed such a waste of

effort, when with a word he could have called me to him. When I suggested as much he smiled, but continued the slow and painful journey through the hall to my room. Upon one occasion the effort to get there was such, that his hands were like ice and his lips blue when he reached me. Sinking into the chair he looked at me, but the hand he extended was not for me to feel his pulse, but to take in mine. There was no need for words to tell me that he thought he was dying, having used, as he believed, his last ounce of strength to reach his goal. With the touch of his hand came the consciousness, clear as clairvoyance, that it was his intention to die in that particular chair — if he could; and the significance of it brought the tears to my eyes. He was determined that the poignant memories of Toto, associated with the chair, should be so interwoven with his own, that her chair as well as her ashes should become indissolubly a part of himself. No touching act of his whole life so stretched out and reached the inner recesses of my being

as that one. It wiped out a multitude of lesser things as the sun obliterates candle light. With unerring intuition, he knew how this would penetrate more and more with the years, till it would become indelibly stamped on my heart.

This, and one other incident, small in itself yet colossal in its significance, and showing the sweet and sympathetic side of his nature, stand in relief against his subsidiary weaknesses. Shortly before his death, my father had, at Mr. Saltus' request, given him a small canvas, a daub of daisies painted by me at the age of seven, and, crude as it was, retained by an unusually devoted parent. Mr. Saltus was particularly attached to it, and it hung in the room beside his bed. Over and over I begged him to let me destroy the hideous thing, but he was up in arms at the suggestion, replying every time:—

"After a while you can, for no one but Snipps shall have those daisies. When I die I

want you to put them in my hands and have them cremated with me."

The day before his passing he referred to it again, exacting a promise that I would do so, —and it was carried out. Though the subject of death was constantly on his tongue, and he outlined the details he wanted carried out for his funeral, it was more in the way of precaution than anything else, that being a marked characteristic of his.

Sitting in the arm-chair by the window in my bed-room the month before his passing, he looked out into the splendid immensity of the June sky and chatted freely and happily about the Great Adventure.

"What a lot I must make good next life!" he exclaimed again and again. "I did not realize the verities for so long. The light came late, but I cannot lose it now, and I will build better next time."

His tortured body had become a prison to him.

"I'm tired of these old clothes," he told me

over and over again. "I want a new deal, to begin as a little boy once more. But in the interval of freedom on the other side, I want to roam at will through the Halls of Learning, to feed my soul with the food of the mental plane." That was his prayer.

The cynic, the satirist, the jester with life, as the world believed him to be,—false faces all—dissolved, and the real ego emerged, to play hide-and-seek no longer. The timidity, the humility, to conceal which he had assumed so much that he was not, spoke now:—

"Don't let a curious public come here to gaze at me after I am out of my body. Let me be forgotten. I have done nothing worth while. It will be my mistakes by which I will be remembered, if at all. Since I began to take myself seriously in hand, I have lived in semi-obscurity. Let me go in the same way. Don't put our address in the newspapers for a curious crowd to come here. Have a simple Theosophical service over my old clothes,—and

for God's sake no black anywhere, — on yourself or about the place."

Assured by me that I would do so, he went on: —

"You have suffered so much that you are numb and immune. Let the sunshine in and let the canary sing. Help my departing spirit by your poise and power. Keep everyone away, and bury my ashes with your own hands."

Though talking of his transition almost constantly, Mr. Saltus was very much like the woman who, being asked if she believed in ghosts, said, "No, but I'm dreadfully afraid of them." Every hour or two he would refer to what we would do when he regained his health. Rosy pictures of a rose garden in California were painted, and delightful dreams of sitting under a banyan tree at Mrs. Besant's feet took shape from the smoke of his cigarettes.

Meanwhile the manuscript of Mr. Saltus' last novel, "The Golden Flood," was sketched

in the rough up to the middle of chapter twelve. The words did not drop from his pen as they had once done. Weariness and effort crept in. Though work to him was still a song, death was the refrain. Midsummer came. Mr. Saltus, too ill by far to be taken into the country, seemed nevertheless a little better.

He took a fancy for sitting on the roof of our apartment house. Taking up camp chairs and pillows I arranged to make it comfortable for him, and he sat there for hours, reading or chatting with me.

Toward the middle of July unusually hot weather made this lofty sitting room doubly acceptable to him, for our apartment, being on the top of the house, was painfully hot all night, though electric fans were kept running at high speed in his bed-room and study. In these circumstances the cool air of the roof offered freshness and relief.

Evening after evening we sat there looking down upon the city below, where multiple electric lights and illuminated signs fought for

supremacy, and above to where the stars pierced the softness of evening. The height, the silence, and the stars particularly, took us back more than twenty years to the turret of the old Narragansett Casino, from which we had first looked at them together, and we returned there many times in our chats.

"How much we have had to learn since those days," Mr. Saltus remarked the last time we sat there. "It's taken bludgeoning blows, but, after all, we have absorbed something, don't you think?" He sighed.

"Yes," I said. "Our personalities thought they wanted so many things, but our egos knew we wanted only to grow, and so gave us the chance."

The mysteries and beauties of Infinity seemed to fall from the stars like blessings. Sometimes we sat there till midnight chatting over the splendors of space, cause and cosmos, kalpas of time, and creations yet to be cradled. However far we wandered in dimensional

space, greater and vaster became the vistas beyond.

It is possible that these intimate talks on the abstract gave Mr. Saltus the interior poise to greet the liberating angel who even then was knocking at our door.

The end came suddenly and unexpectedly, and from a cause long supposed to be dormant. It began with a severe chill. Anything can begin that way, and I was not alarmed. Neither was the physician, who, in the absence of Dr. Darlington, was called in. Other chills, however, of greater intensity, followed in rapid succession. They were frightful, each one seeming as if it would be the last. Septic poisoning, super-induced by an internal abscess, developed into acute Bright's disease. Unable at any time to stand intense pain, he found this agony. Opiates were given, but owing to his absorption being so slow they failed to make it endurable. A hospital was the place to have taken Mr. Saltus, and St. Luke's was at the corner of our street. He could have been moved with-

out much distress and I could have been near him. Though he fought to his utmost against crying out under his pain, at the suggestion of a hospital he shrieked:—

"I won't go to St. Luke's, and if you bring a nurse in my room I will kill her. When Toto died and you were almost out of your mind, I kept you beside me and nursed you. You cannot force me to go."

Much as it would have added to his comfort, and necessary as it was in his case to have specific care, the idea of a hospital had to be abandoned. It was hysteria, but in his condition he had to be humored. Had I brought in a nurse against his will, he, she, or both, would have been found dashed to pieces on the pavement outside; and our apartment being on the top floor, the risk was too great.

Mr. Saltus was not an easy man to take care of, for from no other hand than mine would he take food or medicine, nor would he let me leave his side for a moment. The responsibility of turning into a nurse one with such limited

knowledge was not the best thing for him, but it was impossible to do otherwise. To keep his chart, give his medicine and hypodermics, and try to make him believe that he was getting better every moment, was difficult.

Though Mr. Saltus spoke of death as if he were playing hide-and-seek with it, it was offset by his lament: —

"Poor child, poor child! I am killing you, but I cannot help it, for you are the only one I can let touch me. When Snippsy gets well he will be so good that you will not like him. I'm paying a frightful karma. The Masters of Wisdom must be hastening my evolution."

Though he spoke of recovery, it was only while I sat beside him. Upon an occasion when, anxious to be sure of an important prescription being filled accurately, I suggested going to the chemist's at the corner and leaving him with my mother, with whom Mr. Saltus was perfectly at home, he screamed so loudly that people in a neighboring apartment rushed in to offer assistance.

"Don't leave me! Don't leave me! I might die while you are away," he called out.

His illness lasted but eight days. On July 30th at three in the afternoon I saw death in his face, although neither the physician nor my mother expected it so soon. To keep him cheered and comforted was all that could be done. His horror of disagreeable things was such that, although he asked me many times a day if I thought he might die, I persistently told him that he was getting better.

It was my desire to send for Mr. Saltus' daughter, that she might see him again before the end, but fearing his reaction I did not.

At nine that night he was a little easier. The morphine was then for the first time able to deaden his agony.

"For God's sake lie down on the sofa and rest," he urged, looking at my haggard face.

Long accustomed to insomnia, I was able, as one can under great excitement, to go without sleep and almost without food for a week, but

it was beginning to tell, and my hands and lips quivered.

"Do lie down. You look as if you were going to die, poor child," he urged again.

Shaking my head, for speech was beyond me, I sat still. The clock, set in the middle of bottles, pills and restoratives which had to be given at intervals during the night, ticked on.

"What of the morphine?" Mr. Saltus asked. "I am easier now; but for the morning? Have you enough?"

Again I smiled and nodded. That he could speak of a morrow was tragic.

The end came at three a. m., July 31st, while it was still dark, and was quite painless. Conscious until the last, it is doubtful if until then Mr. Saltus realized that he was passing out of the body. Efforts to give him nitroglycerin were futile.

Grasping the tiny Rosicrucian cross he always wore about his neck, which symbolized all that he aspired to, he put his other hand in mine.

"Mowgy!" He could say no more. It was his last word, as, casting off the fetters of the flesh, he passed onward into the larger life, where "even the weariest river winds somewhere safe to sea."

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